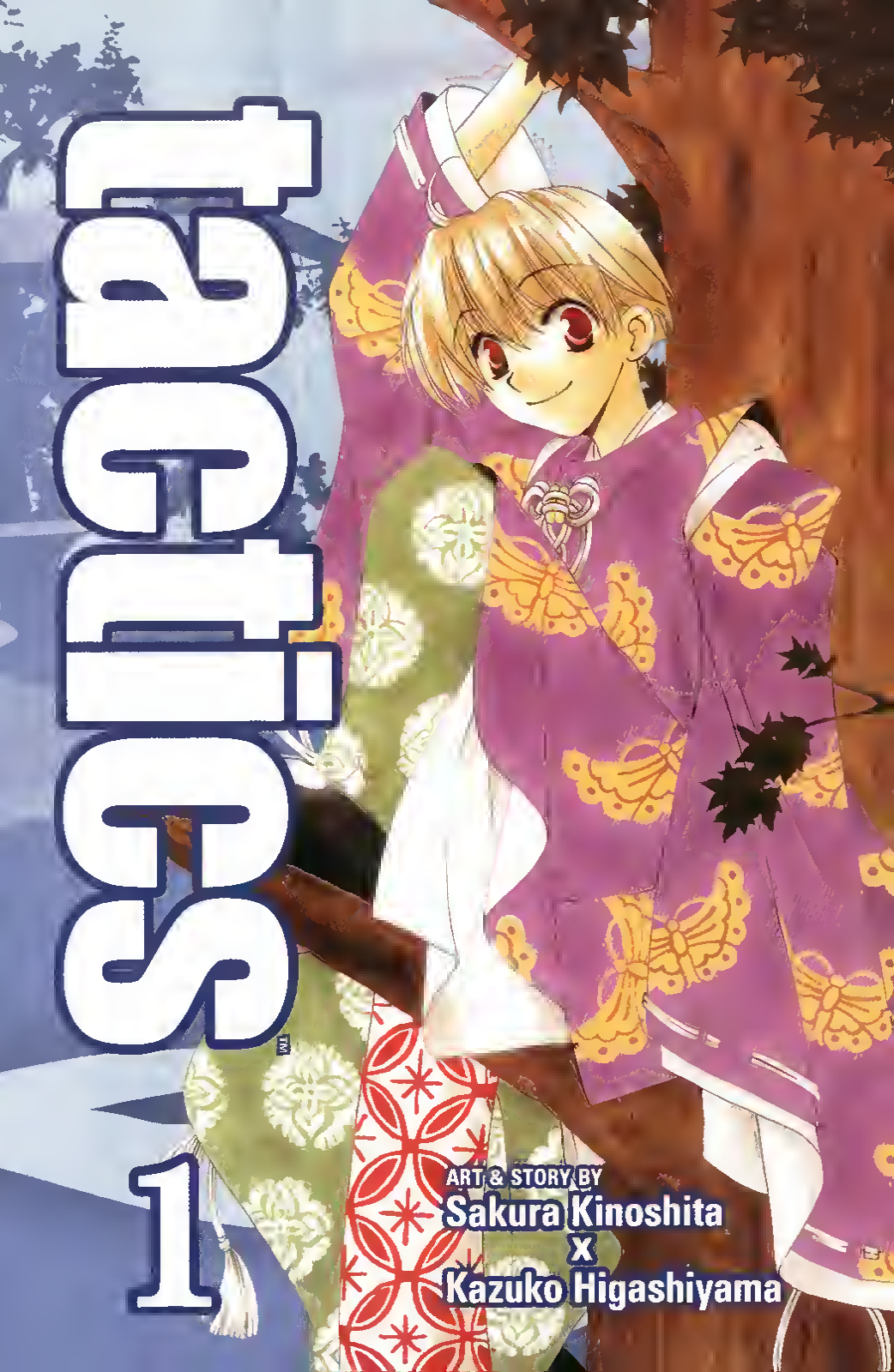

Sand Land
1
ART & STORY BY
Sakura Kinoshita
x
Kazuko Higashiyama

木下さくら × 東山和

tactics

Sakura Kinoshita × Kazuko Higashiyama

1

chapter 1 5

chapter 2 63

chapter 3 115

tactics

volume 1
by Sakura Kinoshita and
Kazuko Higashiyama

tactics Volume 1

ART & STORY BY: Sakura Kinoshita × Kazuko Higashiyama

© 2002 SAKURA KINOSHITA and KAZUKO HIGASHIYAMA
All Rights Reserved. First published in Japan in 2002
by MAG Garden Corporation. English translation rights
arranged with MAG Garden Corporation.

All rights reserved. No portion of this book may be
reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means
without written permission from the copyright holders.
This manga is a work of fiction. Any resemblance to
actual events or locales or persons, living or dead, is
entirely coincidental.

CHAPTER 1

tactics

HIC!
MMM...
THAT'S A COMMON HUMAN SENTIMENT, KAN-CHAN. YOU'RE AN EXCEPTION.
IT HUWTS ME TO HEAW DAT.
NOT ME--YOU DEY WERE SAYIN DAT YOWKAI'RE GROSS.
WAS SOMEONE PICKING ON YOU AGAIN KAN-CHAN?
B-BUT I CAN'T EVEN DEFEND YOU PWOPEWWY! NO ONE TAKES ME SEWIOUSWY
SEEING YOWKAI ISN'T ENOUGH--I HAVE TO BE MOW POWEFUW

AN' DEN I COULD TEW EVWEONE TO SHUT UP ABOUT YOU GUYS!
AN' IF HE'S WAY STWONGA DAN DEMONS, I CAN NAME HIM HAWUKA. HEE HEE!
STWONGA DAN DEMONS? WOW...!
IF HE JOINED ME EVWEONE WOULD WISTEN TA ME!
MORE POWERFUL? WELL, THAT'S EASY ENOUGH, KAN-CHAN--JOIN FORCES WITH THE DEMON-EATING TENGU!
WHAT'S A DEMON-EATIN' TENGOO?
HE'S A LEGENDARY TENGU SAID TO BE VASTLY STRONGER THAN DEMONS. HE'S CURRENTLY SEALED SOMEWHERE, THOUGH.

BUT FINDING THE TENGU--OR WHERE HE'S SEALED, TO BE MORE EXACT--HAS PROVEN DIFFICULT AND OFTEN FRUSTRATING

SINCE MY YOUKAI FRIENDS PLANTED THE SEED OF CHALLENGE IN MY HEAD, I'VE BEEN SEARCHING ENDLESSLY FOR THAT TEAMMATE-TO-END-ALL-TEAMMATES.

ARE YOU STILL LOOKING FOR THAT TENGU, KAN-CHAN?
GET BACK TO YOUR JOB!
!
HELLO, YOUKO-CHAN.
MY JOB? DO YOU MEAN MY FOLK-LORE RESEARCH? OR MY YOUKAI EXTERMINATING?
WHICH ONE DO YOU LIST ON YOUR TAXES?
THEY'RE BOTH HOBBIES, TECHNICALLY.
HO HO HO!
JERK! YOU WORK ME TO THE BONE WHILE YOU SIT AROUND AND PLAY SLACKER!

I'M SORRY, YOUKO-CHAN.
BUT THERE ARE RULES TO THESE THINGS--YOU HAVE TO SERVE THE HUMAN WHO NAMED YOU.
BUT YOU'RE A LOSER! AND MY NAME'S A DAMN PUN!
CAREFUL--YOUR EARS ARE SHOWING. ♡

NOTE: YOUKO'S NAME IS WRITTEN WITH THE CHARACTERS FOR "DEMON" AND "FOX" RATHER THAN THE MORE TYPICAL SPELLINGS.

tactics 1

...YOUKAI ARE TARGETING ME?
I'M AFRAID I DON'T UNDERSTAND SIR

UM, HELLO
ARE YOU KANTARO ICHINOMIYA?

NOT TO WORRY. I MAY BE A FOLKLORIST BY TRADE...
...BUT I RUN A YOUKAI EXTERMINATION BUSINESS ON THE SIDE.
Your one stop for supernatural needs!

ALTHOUGH I ADMIT I'M NOT GOOD WITH ALL YOUKAI
?
WHISPER

BLAH
MY INNATE ABILITY AND MY STUDIES HAVE MADE ME THE PERFECT EXTERMI-NATOR.
BLAH
I WAS BORN WITH THE ABILITY TO SEE YOUKAI. I DEVELOPED AN INTEREST IN A PARTICULAR TENGU.
BLAH
...AND MY LENGTHY SEARCH FOR HIM HAS MADE ME AN EXPERT IN THE FIELD
(and in folklore, incidentally.)
BLAH

JUST EXPLAINING THE CREDENTIALS, MISS CHIZURU YAMAMOTO.

I see.
AND YOUR POINT IS...?

!!
YOU PROBABLY DIDN'T REALIZE THAT IT'S LEAKING YOUKAI ESSENCE

NOW, TAKE THE BRUISE ON YOUR NECK

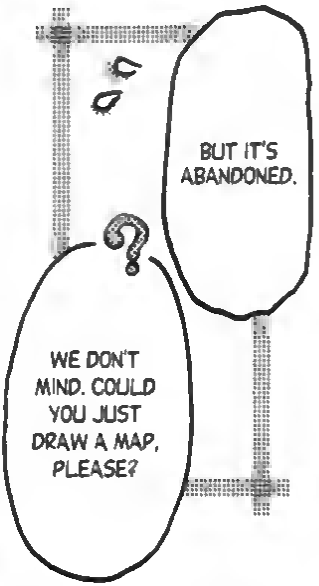
M-MY FIANCÉ, KOUJI FURUYA
WHO DID THAT TO YOU?
..A-ALL RIGHT.
I WAS JUST ON MY WAY TO SEE HIM, ACTUALLY.
PLEASE MR ICHINOMIYA, SAVE MY KOUJI!
TRUST ME!
THEN YOUR FIANCÉ IS SURELY POSSESSED BY A YOUKAI!
HIGH-PRESSURE SELLING TACTICS OF A YOUKAI BUSTER!
MAY I MEET WITH HIM? I NEED MORE INFO ON THE YOUKAI.
I CAN HANDLE IT, MISS. BUT TO DEVELOP PROPER TACTICS TO DEAL WITH THIS PROBLEM...
OH, NO! WHO AM I GOING TO CALL?!

AH, THE LOVELY COUNTRYSIDE
AND ALL IT TOOK WAS TWO UNPLEASANT HOURS ON ONE UNPLEASANT TRAIN.
A SHRINE? WHY ALL THE WAY OUT HERE?
THIS AREA IS DEVOID OF THOSE THESE DAYS, IF MEMORY SERVES, ALTHOUGH THERE USED TO BE A FOX GOD ONE AROUND HERE
SO YOU AND YOUR FIANCÉ HAVE A LONG-DISTANCE (SORT OF) RELATIONSHIP?
NO WE JUST HAVE AN APPOINTMENT AT A SHRINE HERE
EXCUSE ME?
I THINK MY BIRTH PARENTS USED TO RUN IT.
IT'S AN OLD, DECREPIT SHRINE THAT NO ONE VISITS ANYMORE.

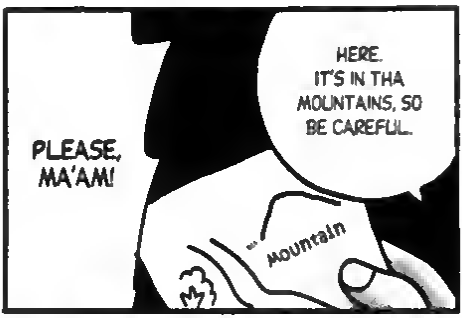
HMM... THAT'S STRANGE.
MY PARENTS DIED WHEN I WAS YOUNG. I WAS ADOPTED INTO THE YAMAMDTO HOUSEHOLD SO EARLY THAT I DON'T REMEMBER THIS VILLAGE.
IT WAS KOUJI, RATHER SUDDENLY, WHO SUGGESTED WE VISIT MY HOMETOWN.
IT IS KOUJI'S BEEN ACTING *VERY* STRANGE LATELY.
HE'S USUALLY SO KIND, BUT FROM TIME TO TIME HIS EYES FLARE UP AND HE GRABS ME BY THE THROAT.
?
IT'S ALL RIGHT, MISS CHIZURU
HE'LL APOLOGIZE TEARFULLY AFTERWARD BUT HIS ACTIONS ARE JUST... FRIGHTENING!

.....
YOUKAI ARE NOTHING TO BE AFRAID OF.
IF WE JUST ACKNOWLEDGE THEIR EXISTENCE, THEY CAN BE QUITE FRIENDLY.
SO YOU REALLY THINK KOUJI IS POSSESSED? I JUST...
OH NO!
I FORGOT THE MAP TO THE SHRINE!
Now we'll never find it!
Wonderful.
YEH. LOOKIN FOR THA SHRINE?

TENKO?!
CURSED?
YE'D BE BETTER OFF GOIN' TO THA LITTLE SHRINE OF LORD TENKO NEAR IT.
IT'S YER TIME TO WASTE. THA PLACE'S CURSED, THOUGH.


BUT IT'S ABANDONED.
WE DON'T MIND. COULD YOU JUST DRAW A MAP, PLEASE?

THEN THAT'S NO TENKO!
THEY SAY THA FOX GOD'S SO STRONG IT CAN EAT DEMONS.
AN' EVERYONE FIGURES IT'S MORE BLESSED THAN THA CRUMMY SHRINE YOU WANT.


PLEASE, MA'AM!
HERE. IT'S IN THA MOUNTAINS, SO BE CAREFUL.
Mountain

WHERE'S MY NO-GOOD HUSBAND WHEN I NEED 'IM?!
GIVE ME MORE DETAILS ON THIS TENKO SHRINE!
EASY, KIDDO! IT'S JUST THA SHRINE FOR THA FOX GOD OF OUR VILLAGE.

SINCE I THOUGHT THIS VILLAGE BELIEVED IN THE FOX, I'D TAKEN IT OFF MY LIST OF PLACES TO SEARCH.
BUT A TENKO? WHO EATS DEMONS?
YOU WONDERFUL WOMAN! TENKO IS A PSEUDONYM FOR TENGU!
Are you all right?
THIS COULD BE IT!
THE TENGU WHO'S BEEN HAUNTING MY WAKING DREAMS!
MR. ICHINO-MIYA? UM..
OH. YES. OF COURSE, WE'LL DO YOU FIRST.

tactics 1

IT'S ALL RIGHT. I'M GLAD YOU'RE HERE!
I'M SORRY I TOOK SO LONG.
KOUJI!
SO THAT'S HER FIANCE. HM?
HE SEEMS HARMLESS BUT SHE SAID HE WOULD
ching
AND MY BELLS ARE REACTING A BIT.
He's definitely possessed.
ching
ching
ARGH! I'LL DEAL WITH THIS QUICKLY THEN RETURN TO MY TENGU!

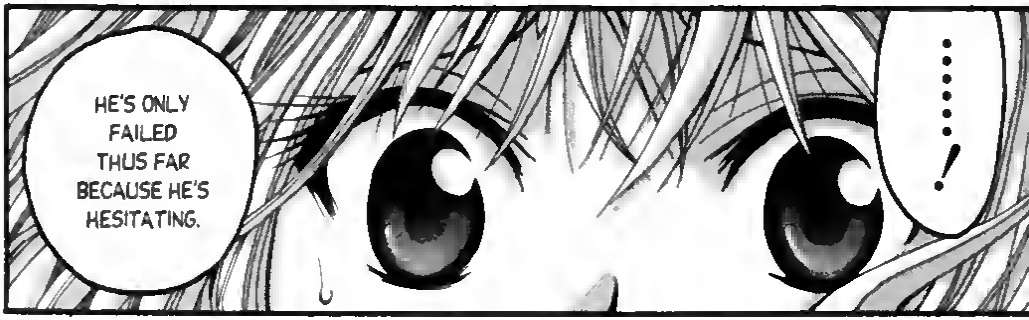
zing
N-NOT THIS PAIN AGAIN!
WHA... OW!
WHAT'S THE MATTER KOUJI?!
R-RUN AWAY... CHIZURU!
IT'S A DEMON!
KYAAAAAH!

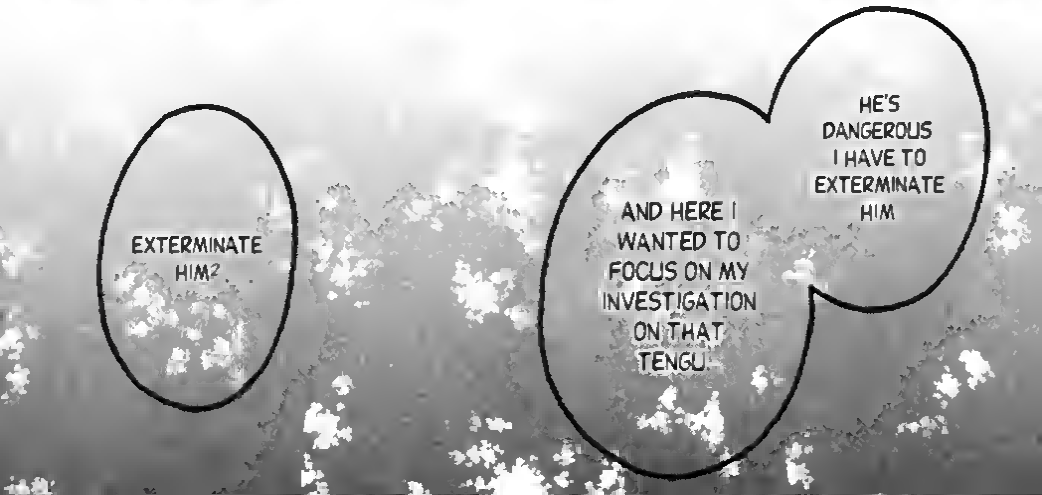
THE ONE KIND OF YOUKAI I'M ABSOLUTELY TERRIBLE WITH!
NTTTGH!
Bonk Bonk
IT HAD TO BE A DEMON. IT HAD TO BE A DEMON!
WHY DIDN'T I REALIZE THIS EARLIER?!
HELP ME, MR. ICHINOMIYA!
...FINE.
DEAR GOD, DEAR BUDDHA, DEAR DEMON-EATING TENGU...
PLEASE HELP ME OUT WITH THIS!

sswish
!?
STAND UP, MISS! WE HAVE TO RUN!
WHAT'S GOING ON, MR ICHINOMIYA?!
AGH!
AGH!
THAT SUTRA BINDS HIS MOVEMENTS. WE HAVE TO RUN WHILE HE'S TRAPPED!
I'LL EXPLAIN ONCE WE'RE SAFE.

...THIS IS EMBARRASSING.
HaH Haa
Haa
ARE YOU ALL RIGHT SIR?
YOU LOOK LIKE YOU'RE IN PAIN!
WHEN I FIRST BECAME AN EXTERMINATOR A DEMON INJURED ME RATHER SEVERELY
THE SCAR LEFT ON MY CHEST FLARES UP AROUND DEMONS NOW— IT LIMITS MY CAPABILITIES
HaH
EXCUSE ME?!
Let me catch my breath.
I THOUGHT YOU WERE THE ONE-STOP SUPERNATURAL AUTHORITY!
I AM. MISS BUT YOUKAI ARE COMPLICATED.
AND ANSWER ME THIS..
Demons are the most vindictive kind.

HE'S AN ENKI-- A KIND OF DEMON WHO DEVELOPS FROM A MALICIOUS HUMAN.
DID YOU DO SOMETHING TO INCUR THAT DEMON'S WRATH?
DON'T BE RIDICULOUS! I NEVER SAW THAT CREATURE BEFORE TODAY!
THAT MALICE IS TARGETED AT YOU-- THE DEMON INTENDS TO KILL YOU.


HE'S ONLY FAILED THUS FAR BECAUSE HE'S HESITATING.
.....!


EXTERMINATE HIM?.
AND HERE I WANTED TO FOCUS ON MY INVESTIGATION ON THAT TENGU.
HE'S DANGEROUS I HAVE TO EXTERMINATE HIM

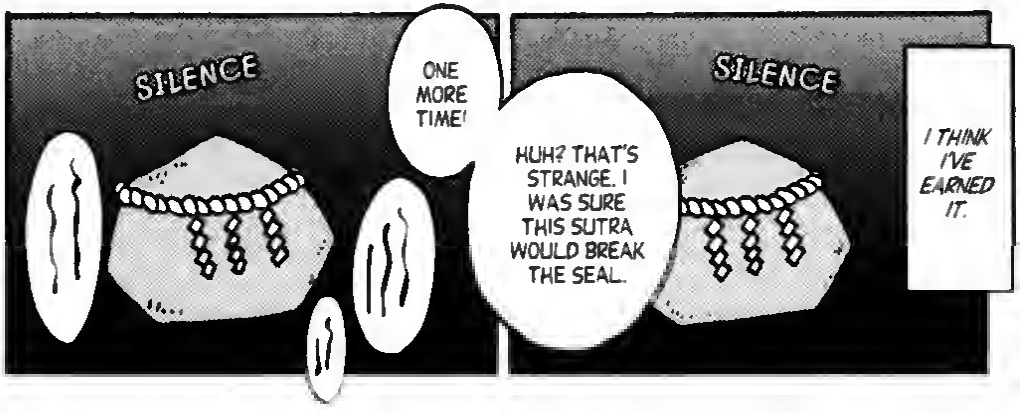
I DON'T PLAN TO.
PLEASE TELL ME...
..YOU WON'T KILL KOUJI!
ching
THESE BELLS RING WHEN THEY DETECT YOUKAI. THEY'RE ONE OF MY TOOLS.
HOW DO YOU KNOW THAT?
I have seven in all!
ching
THEN--
ACK! THE SPELL'S WORN OFF THE ENKI-- WE HAVE TO RUN AGAIN!
Jingle
I-I TWISTED MY ANKLE!
WHAT?!
HOW CLICHÉ!
EEK!
MORE ON THAT LATER. WE HAVE TO RUN!

Farewell!
THE ENKI WON'T BE ABLE TO SEE YOU WITH THAT ON I'LL COME BACK FOR YOU LATER!
W-WAIT, MR. ICHINOMIYA!
ぺち!
DAMMIT! I HAVE NO CHOICE.
?!
WHERE IS IT?
IF IT IS WHERE THE DEMON-EATING TENGU IS SEALED, I'LL BE FINE
IF NOT, I'LL NEED TO RETRIEVE MISS CHIZURU AND FORMULATE A NEW PLAN.
WHERE'S THE TENGU SHRINE?!
ching!!

THERE!
THAT'S PROOF THAT I'M NEAR A STRONG SUPERNATURAL POWER!
MY BELLS ARE GETTING LOUD.
ching
ching
ching
MAYBE...
ching
Small Shrine to the Lord Tenko
THE VILLAGERS MISTOOK THE "TENGU" FOR A "TENKO" AND BECAME FOLLOWERS OF THE FOX GOD, HM?
I NEVER CONSIDERED THAT.

I'VE SCOURED THE EARTH FOR YOU, TENGU.

COME OUT AND BLOW MY MIND.



DON'T... TOY WITH ME! NOT NOW!
I REFUSE TO WASTE YOUR PERFECT NAME!
AND I REFUSE TO BELIEVE THAT I HAVE TO KEEP SEARCHING!
NOW YOU'VE EARNED A KICK!
GET OUT OF THERE, HARUKA!
AGH!
BOOM!
HE WHO BROKE MY SEAL.
?!

...HUMAN.
YOU HAVE MY THANKS...
I AM ONCE AGAIN RELEASED TO THE PHYSICAL WORLD.

IT SEEMS MY IDENTITY HAS SHIFTED.
YOU ARE! YOU MUST BE!
AND YOU CAN EAT DEMONS?!
YOU'RE THE TENGU?
I...
USE ME WELL, HUMAN
YOU HAVE NAMED ME THUS, AND THUS I WILL SERVE YOU.
NOW, I AM HARUKA.

I'VE DREAMED OF THIS MOMENT FOR SO LONG.
I KNEW THAT OUR STRENGTH COMBINED COULD FINALLY MAKE A *DIFFERENCE* IN THIS WORLD.
WE'RE TOGETHER AT LAST, HARUKA.

WHAT DO I DO NOW?!
THE CHARM DISAPPEARED!
YOO HOO! SORRY ABOUT THE WAIT. ♥
MR. ICHINO-MIYA!
PHEW!

WE HAVE A WARRIOR OF LEGEND ON OUR SIDE!
GO!
CHARGE, HARUKA! DEFEAT THAT MISERABLE ENKI!
?
HAVE NO FEAR, MISS CHIZURU!
OTAO
SECURE MY GLORIOUS FUTURE AS A YOUKAI BUSTER!
AND.. WHY AREN'T YOU CHARGING?
YAAAAWN
I JUST WOKE UP, HUMAN. I'M BARELY COHERENT.
Stop Screaming.
NO!
You're shattering my ideal image of you!
YOU CAN'T MEAN THAT!
I NEED YOU NOW! NOW!
That's your excuse?!
KOUJI..
Bark
ring-a-ling

KOUJI ...
PLEASE, STOP THIS!
GGGH...
NOW WHAT?
THE ENKI SEEMS... OFF.
.....
AND HE'S RUNNING.
AH!

HOW ODD. AND NOW, GREAT— THE KNOCKED OUT MISS CHIZURU
LET'S REGROUP AT MY PLACE, HARUKA
I NEED TO DO SOME RESEARCH.
I STILL DON'T KNOW THE CONNECTION BETWEEN HIM TRYING TO KILL HER AND THAT OLD SHRINE.
IF THERE'S ONE THING I'VE LEARNED, IT'S THAT EVERY TACTIC TAKES RESEARCH

THE YEAR MISS CHIZURU WAS BORN, THERE WAS A MASSACRE AT THAT SHRINE.
THERE
FOUND IT!
KAN-CHAN.
BUT WHAT, I WONDER?
THE ENKI PROBABLY BEARS SOME RELATION TO THAT.
WOW!
AND THEN I BORROWED THAT SUIT THAT WAS TOO BIG FOR YOU.
I TOOK CARE OF MISS CHIZURU AND PUT HER TO BED.
THANK YOU, YOUKO-CHAN.

I'VE NEVER DRESSED LIKE THIS...
...BUT IT'S NOT HALF BAD.
LIKE ME!
POP
AWAY. I CAN DO THAT
WHERE ARE YOUR WINGS?
FLAP
WOW WHAT?
WOW.
HM.
SINCE YOU'RE A DEMON-EATING TENGU, I ALWAYS IMAGINED YOU'D LOOK INTIMIDATING
BUT YOU'RE ACTUALLY QUITE LOVELY.

DO YOU THINK MISS CHIZURU WILL WAKE UP SOON?
Woe...
THAT'S THE NAME OF A FEMALE WRESTLER.
I'LL GO CHECK.
春華
"spring flowers"
THAT WOULD HUMILIATE ME BEYOND BELIEF.
BUT INSTEAD OF MEANING "DISTANT," LET'S CHANGE THE KANJI, SHALL WE?
WE CAN KEEP YOUR NAME AS "HARUKA."
perfect!
BY THE WAY, HARU-CHAN. ARE YOU ACQUAINTED WITH KOUJI'S ENKI?
I'VE NEVER MET HIM BEFORE, NO.
HM. THAT MEANS HE HASN'T BEEN A DEMON FOR VERY LONG THEN
CRASH
ガシャーン!
YAAAAH!

ズルズルズル
THAT CAME FROM MISS CHIZURU'S ROOM!
A D-DEMON TOOK YOUR GIRL, KAN-CHAN!
WAAAAAH!
YOUKO-CHAN! WHAT HAPPENED?!

HARUKA--TO THE SHRINE!
...NOW REMEMBER WHAT WE TALKED ABOUT.
WHAT? HOW I CAN'T EAT THE ENKI?
YOU'RE THE MASTER BUT I STILL THINK YOU'RE OFF ON THIS ONE.

110
IT'S NOT HOW I DO THINGS. I WAS OSTRACIZED BECAUSE OF MY ABILITIES WHEN I WAS YOUNG, YOU KNOW.
WHEN MY HUMAN FRIENDS LEFT ME I TURNED TO YOUKAI FOR COMPANY.
AREN'T YOU A YOUKAI EXTERMINATOR? YOU SHOULD BE KILLING THE YOUKAI WHO HURT HUMANS.
I *LIKE* YOUKAI. I CONSIDER THEM FRIENDS.
SO I "RESCUE" THEM RATHER THAN "EXTERMINATE" THEM
BUT YOU'RE STILL NOT ONE OF THEM.
AND THEY DON'T ALL LIKE *YOU.*

BUT THAT'S WHY I WANTED A PARTNER AS POWERFUL AS YOU.
I KNOW IT'S A RISKY GAME.
THE DEMON-EATING TENGU!
I-IT'S THE TENGU!
REALLY AND SAY, DO YOU HAPPEN TO KNOW AN ENKI WHO WAS BORN AROUND HERE?
DON'T WORRY--I WON'T LET HIM HURT YOU.
GOOD DAY! ER... GOOD EVENING!
REALLY?
I'M SCARED OF THE DEMON-EATING TENGU!
HMPH.

YEAH! HE BECAME A DEMON AT KAMIKUI SHRINE!
KAMIKUI?
KAMIKUI... "GOD-EATING"?
YOU MEAN THE CUSTOM OF EATING SACRIFICIAL ANIMALS OR GOD-SHAPED FOOD TO INHERIT DIVINE GRACE?

CHIZURU... PLEASE, KILL ME!
I'LL END UP KILLING *YOU* IF YOU DON'T!
WHY, KOUJI?!
WHY ARE YOU DOING THIS?!

I CAN'T... TELL YOU
IF YOU WON'T, I WILL.
M-MR ICHINO-MIYA?
TELL HER THE TRUTH ABOUT YOUR GRUDGE AGAINST HER FAMILY, KOUJI
YAWN
I KNOW YOU'RE TRYING TO ELIMINATE THE BLOODLINE OF THE KAMIKUI SHRINE.
I'M BETTING YOU EVEN KILLED HER PARENTS, DIDN'T YOU?
WHAT?!

I THINK YOUR FAMILY HAS THE POWER OF DIVINE POSSESSION.
Y-YOU'RE RIGHT MY MOTHER WAS A SPIRIT MEDIUM.
SHE USED HER ABILITIES TO TELL FORTUNES AND PROVIDE FOR THE TWO OF US.
BUT THE HUMANS OF THIS SHRINE USED THAT POWER FOR THEIR SERVICES! THEY KILLED MY MOTHER...
...AND THEN ATE HER!
I COULDN'T FORGIVE THEM.. BUT I STILL FELL IN LOVE WITH THEIR DAUGHTER
HUFF
THERE'S NOTHING I CAN DO NOW. I HATE BECOMING A DEMON, BUT I STILL HAVE THESE HORNS.
KOUJI...
IS GOD PUNISHING ME? IS THIS DIVINE RETRIBUTION?!
HUFF

I'LL TEAR YOU ALL APART RIGHT HERE!
CHIZURU!
I-I'LL KILL YOU! AND THE TENGU!
!!
!!

AND YOU.
I'LL ENJOY THIS, YOU ARROGANT LITTLE KNOW-IT-ALL.
HGGH!
GAAAH!

Y-YES! PREDICTABLY IMPRESSIVE, HARUKA!
DEMON
MIND YOUR THREATS
AN *INSECT* LIKE YOU...
...WOULD FAIL TO EVEN TOUCH ME.

WH-WHAT ARE YOU DOING?! LET GO!
I THINK IT WORKED!

WH-
WHY DID YOU PROTECT ME, CHIZURU?
KOUJI...
DID WHAT?! WHAT'S WRONG WITH YOU?!
WE DID IT!
LET ME SHARE THE BURDEN OF THE MAN I LOVE!
IF YOU'RE GOING TO BE PUNISHED, I WANT TO BE PUNISHED WITH YOU.

YOU WON'T KILL MISS CHIZURU.
KOUJI.
YOU'RE NO LONGER AN ENKI.
YOUR LOVE FOR HER HAS WON OVER YOUR BITTERNESS.
CAN'T YOU SEE THAT?
NOW WE JUST NEED YOU TO ONCE MORE BECOME *HUMAN.*

SNIFF

WE'VE GONE OVER THIS, HARUKA-- I DON'T KILL YOUKAI.
AND THE PHYSICAL CONTACT WAS SO I COULD DEFLECT YOUR UNIQUE THUNDER.
ALL RIGHT, YOU. WHY DID YOU TACKLE ME EARLIER?
A HUGE SUCCESS!
IT DID THE JOB, THOUGH. YOU SHOCKED THE ENKI *JUST* ENOUGH TO MAKE HIM VULNERABLE TO MY PURIFICATION, BUT WITHOUT TURNING HIM TO CHARCOAL!
Wa ha ha ha ha!
I'M BAD WITH DEMONS, I'LL ADMIT.

ぺち ぺち
AND ON TOP OF THAT, THE SURPRISINGLY RICH MISS CHIZURU TIPPED ME TO HIGH HEAVEN. I LOVE TODAY!
BUT THIS PARTICULAR CASE GAVE ME MY ELUSIVE TENGU, SO I WOULDN'T DARE COMPLAIN.
REWARD
He's gonna waste a perfectly good tengu!
EVEN A BADASS LIKE YOU WILL *CRUMBLE* UNDER THAT GUY.
weep for me!
WELCOME TO HELL, HARUKA-CHAN.
WHAT DO YOU INTEND TO DO TO ME?
NOOOO!
.....!
A CHARM FOR WHEN A FOX GETS NOISY. (ACTUALLY EXISTS!)
DON'T MAKE ME USE THIS, YOUKO-CHAN.

.....
WELL... I WAS HOPING WE COULD BE FRIENDS.
!
WHA...?
Don't fall for the cute face!
THIS IS HOW THE LITTLE BEAST GETS YOUKAI TO BE HIS SLAVES!
DON'T LISTEN TO HIM, HARUKA!
Frieeeeends...

I FIGHT FOR THE JUSTICE OF ALL YOUKAI, DON'T I?
SO WHAT IF I MAKE A LITTLE CASH ON THE SIDE? GOTTA PAY THE BILLS! YOU'RE TWISTING MY NOBLE CAUSE
YOU NEEDN'T BE SO INFLAMMATORY, YOUKO-CHAN.

GRIN
HAVE YOU BEEN PLOTTING TO *ENSLAVE* ME FOR ALL THESE YEARS?
W-WAIT. YOU SAID EARLIER THAT YOU HAD MY PERFECT NAME.

I WONDER.
YOU'RE PRETTY EVIL FOR A LITTLE GUY.

偈
尊応諸方
弘誓深如海
地獄種諸悪
生老病死苦
以漸悉令滅
真観清浄
大智
彼観
念時得消
被困
無量苦逼
生

CHAPTER 2

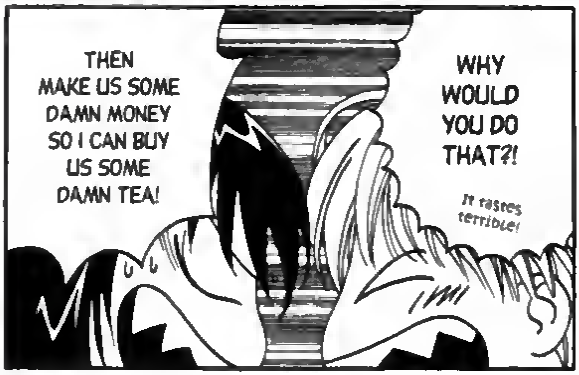
tactics

STOP CLINGING TO ME, HUMAN.
OOW! HEY!
CRASH
YOU STOP BEING DIFFICULT! SIT DOWN AND TALK TO ME.
I WANT TEA AND I WANT CHATTING! NOW!
HARUKA...
YOU FULFILLED MY LIFELONG QUEST THE SECOND YOU POPPED YOUR PRETTY LITTLE HEAD OUT OF THAT UGLY LITTLE ROCK.
AND NOW YOU'RE MINE, AND WE'LL BE TOGETHER FOREEEEVER!
AH HaHa HaHa!
PSYCHO

BECAUSE YOU'RE AN ASS.
Clearly.
WHY MUST YOU DESTROY EVERYTHING I LOVE?!
BACK OFF, KAN-CHAN.
HARUKA-CHAN NEEDS HIS SPACE.
C'MON, HARUKA-CHAN--IT'S TIME FOR LECTURE.
WAIT WAIT WAIT!
Now you're conspiring behind my back?!
FREEZE
HARUKA, YOUKO-CHAN, FREEZE!

STUPID NAMES.
HE OWNS US.
ISN'T THIS NICE? NOW WE'LL ALL HAVE TEA AND CHATTING.
Fox
Tengu
.....
WHATEVER. HE DOES ACCEPT US... SO I GUESS I CAN LET SOME OF THIS STUFF SLIDE.
IT'S NOT THAT DIRTY! I WASH IT AFTER USING IT.
It's dirty and disgusting! You're way too Hot to slurp out of a toilet!
THAT WAS BOTH LURID AND OFFENSIVE!
HARUKA-CHAN! IS THIS YOUR PIECE OF CRAP?
IT'S MY TEA BOWL.
I KNOW WHAT IT IS!

YOUKO-CHAN, TENGU ARE KNOWN TO CARRY THEIR PERSONAL TEA BOWLS.
THEY'RE CONSIDERED VERY PRECIOUS.
I SUCKLED OUT OF THIS, AND I'LL DO IT UNTIL I DIE.
I DON'T CARE YOU'RE STILL GROSS
You're ruining your hotness!


THEN MAKE US SOME DAMN MONEY SO I CAN BUY US SOME DAMN TEA!
WHY WOULD YOU DO THAT?!
It tastes terrible!

HM? YOUKO-CHAN, THE TEA'S TOO WEAK
WELL, YEAH-- I DILUTED IT.
SIP SSSSSIP

We burned through the reward from that last youkai job.
AND I HAVEN'T HAD MANY CLIENTS FOR MY YOUKAI BUSINESS, EITHER
I MISS MONEY.
I GUESS THE PAYMENT FOR MY MANUSCRIPT RAN OUT
MY JOB PAYS CRAP WE'RE BROKE!
SSSSIP

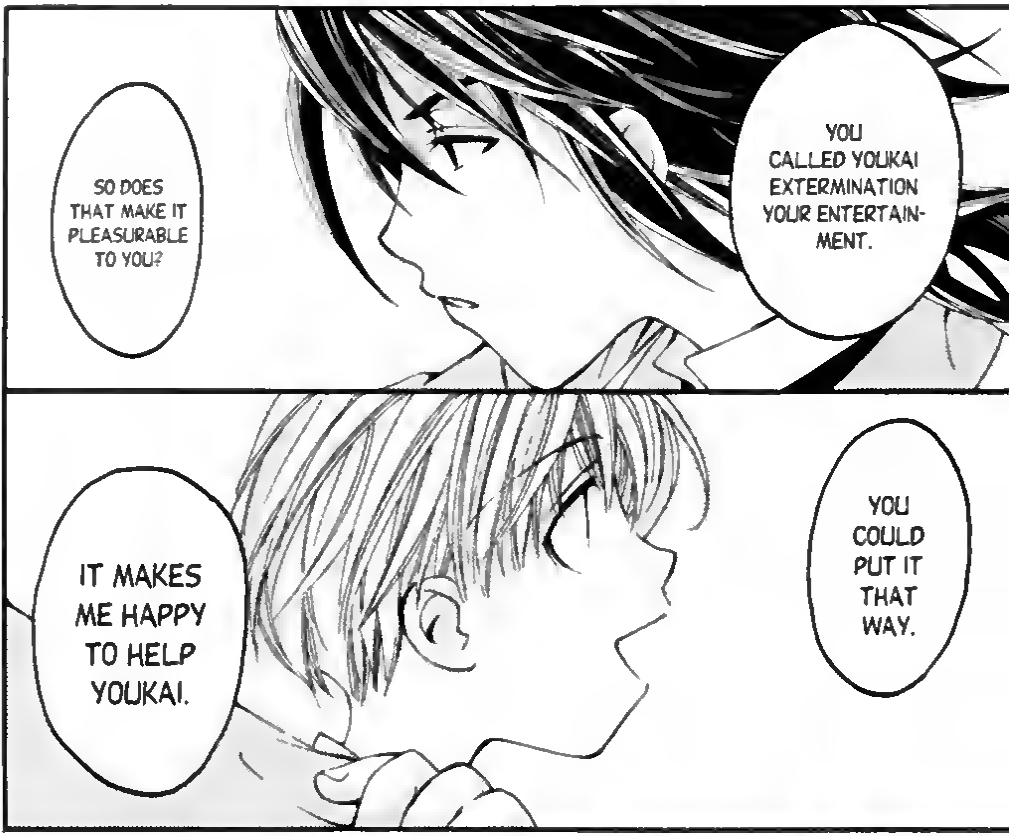
ICHINOMIYA-SENSEI.
PAT
THEN WHY DON'T YOU TURN IN YOUR MANUSCRIPT AND MAKE MY JOB LESS HELLISH?
GYAAAH!
M-MISS REIKO! WHAT A WONDERFUL UNANNOUNCED VISIT!
YOUR PIECES ON FOLKLORE DON'T SELL AS IT IS.
YOU'RE A FAILURE AS A WRITER.
AND YOU'RE LATE. CONSISTENTLY.
GAAAH!
Failure!
えぐ
えぐ
WOW... WAKE UP ON THE EXCEPTIONALLY MEAN SIDE OF THE BED THIS MORNING, MISS REIKO?
THE FACT THAT YOU ABUSE YOUR EDITOR IS JUST ICING ON THE CAKE.
I DO HAVE A HEADACHE, BUT THAT DOESN'T MAKE YOU LESS LATE.
えぐ

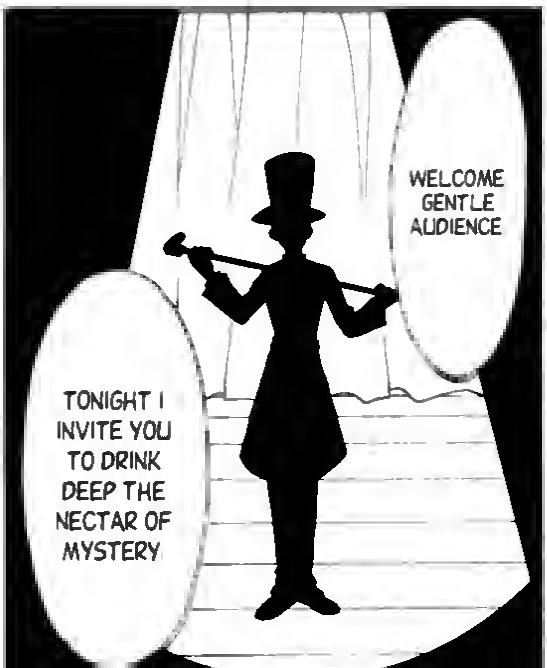
SHE'S FROM THE COMPANY THAT PUBLISHES KAN-CHAN'S FOLKLORE RESEARCH.
WHO'S SHE?
CNAW
CNAW
CNAW
CNAW
SIGH.
MAYBE IT'S MY PERIOD?
TURN
!
OOH! HI, KAN-CHAN!
WHAT THE HECK?
HEY! PRACTICE ON HER, HARUKA-CHAN!
GOT IT!
HUH?
WOO!
IT'S A PLEASURE MEETING YOU, MISS REIKO.

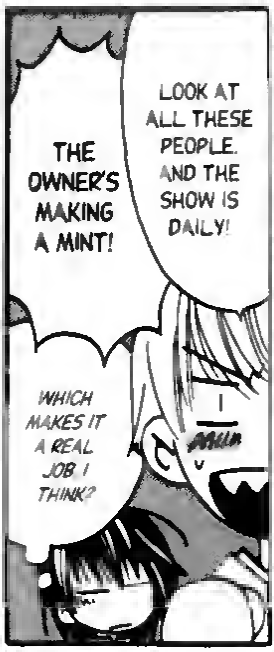
I'M HARUKA.
...BUT YOUR VISIT IS NOW THE HIGHLIGHT.
I MOVED IN A FEW DAYS AGO...
BUT I NEEDED YOUR ATTENTION, KAN-CHAN!
THOUGH you can have the ones on corpses, if you want.
WE TALKED ABOUT THIS-- NO EATING HUMAN HEADS.
HE'S A NATURAL AT FAKING INTEREST!
MAYBE I CAN WHORE HIM OUT.
SWOO!
Like that?
Money!
THE GUYS (?) HAVE BEEN GONE FOR DAYS!
MY FRIENDS DISAPPEARED AND THEY NEVER CAME BACK!

A YOUKAI SHOWCASE?
I WAS IN THE AREA TO COLLECT INFO ON A YOUKAI SHOWCASE THAT JUST OPENED.
BUSTING YOUR CHOPS WAS BONUS
ODD.
ANYWAY, SENSEI--I'M REALLY BUSY TODAY, SO YOU'RE OFF THE HOOK FOR NOW
But stay out of trouble!
Even the magazines are jumping on board.
YOUKAI SHOWCASE
I'M HOPING TO INTERVIEW THE OWNER AND PUT HIM ON THE SPOT ABOUT HIS SHOW'S AUTHENTICITY
EVERYONE'S TALKING ABOUT IT. IT'S A PERFORMANCE BY ALL KINDS OF YOUKAI
You didn't hear about it, sensei?
So she likes you, but she didn't pay. I need to think this through.
BYE, HARUKA!

WOW. MISS REIKO WASN'T KIDDING WHEN SHE SAID THIS PLACE WAS POPULAR.
Youkai Showcase
Youkai showcase
SQUEEZE
I DON'T UNDERSTAND THE MASS APPEAL.
SQUEEZE
.....
IT'S A TYPE OF POPULAR ENTERTAINMENT-- IT GIVES THE COMMON FOLK PLEASURE.
EMOTIONAL STIMULATION IS A FACET OF WELL-ROUNDED DEVELOPMENT.
JUST FOLLOW ALONG, HARUKA.


SO DOES THAT MAKE IT PLEASURABLE TO YOU?
YOU CALLED YOUKAI EXTERMINATION YOUR ENTERTAINMENT.
IT MAKES ME HAPPY TO HELP YOUKAI.
YOU COULD PUT IT THAT WAY.


WELCOME GENTLE AUDIENCE
TONIGHT I INVITE YOU TO DRINK DEEP THE NECTAR OF MYSTERY


LOOK AT ALL THESE PEOPLE. AND THE SHOW IS DAILY!
THE OWNER'S MAKING A MINT!
WHICH MAKES IT A REAL JOB I THINK?
Mun

...I DON'T LIKE IT HERE.
WELL, IT'S REALLY CROWDED. JUST HOLD ON TO ME.

I IMAGINE YOU ENVY LOTS OF PEOPLE.
It's very destructive.
THAT MUST BE THE OWNER ENVY!
I WILL GUIDE YOUR WONDROUS JOURNEY
roll roll roll
NOW, FOR OUR FIRST PIECE: THE RAIN GOD'S MENIAL SERVANT.
O H ! !
IT'S THE AMEFURI-KOZOU!
PLEASE PREPARE TO BE AMAZED.
INDEED, HERE I HAVE THE LEGITIMATE AMEFURI-KOZOU.
YOU'RE ALL FAMILIAR WITH HIM.
WHAT'S GOING ON, HARUKA?!
Really?
WAIT. THEY CAN ALL SEE HIM?
.....

オアアア…
OOOOH!
EEEK!
WOW! HOW'D HE DO THAT?
I THOUGHT IT WAS A DOLL.
BUT THE THING'S CRYING!
I... I THINK WE SHOULD GO, HARUKA.
……
ALL RIGHT.
AS YOU CAN SEE.

YOUKAI WALK AMONG US IN THIS WORLD
THEY COULD BE BESIDE YOU WITHOUT YOUR REALIZING IT.
AND SOME OF THEM... MAY EVEN LOOK HUMAN.

THAT'S WEIRD.
HE HAD *REAL* YOUKAI?
COFFEE

THE NAMES.
IF I HAD TO GUESS.
pour some for me, too!
HOW'D THE OWNER GET THEM TO SHOW THEIR REAL FORMS?
Not all youkai can do that-just awesome ones, like me.
THAT'S THE QUESTION, ISN'T IT?
NAMING YOUKAI TAKES TALENT. I WONDER WHAT *THAT* GUY HAS.
BUT THAT CAN'T CHANGE THEIR POWERS-- THEY STILL SHOULDN'T BE ABLE TO SHOW THEIR FORMS.
GIVING THEM NAMES IS A WAY HE CAN KEEP THEM CAPTIVE.

I HAVE TO LOOK INTO THIS.
OF COURSE YOU DO
THEN DO IT ALONE.
WHAT?
WHY?
ひど…
I DON'T LIKE THAT OWNER.
And I'd rather not get near him.
ばっ
LET'S NOT FORGET WHO'S THE MASTER HERE!
HOW COULD I FORGET? AND GIVE ME THAT!

BAD LITTLE BOYS...
...GET PUNISHED BY THEIR MASTERS.
NEENER NEENER
GIVE ME BACK MY TEA BOWL!
NO! I DON'T WANNA!
KAN-CHAN, YOU'RE IN A RESTAURANT THIS IS WHY WE CAN NEVER GO OUT!
PTOOIE!
NO tea for you!
YOU WANT TO PLAY?
I'M UP FOR THAT.
皆 KAI
在 ZAI
闘 TOU
陣 JIN
臨 RIN
兵 PYOU
者 SHA
前 ZEN
裂 RETSU
KAN-CHAN! THE KUJI IS ONE OF YOUR STRONGEST YOUKAI PURIFICATION SEALS!

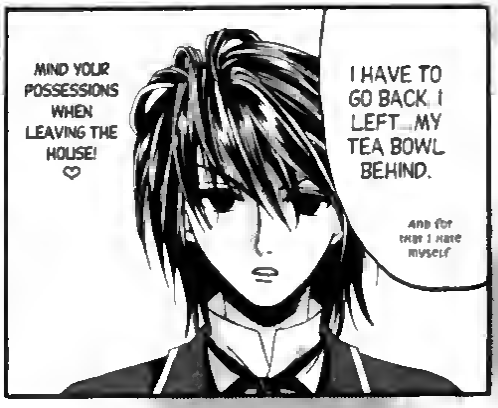
WHOA...
HE JUST SMASHED THE KUJI!

I CAN'T EVEN TELL YOU HOW MUCH YOU JUST HUMILIATED US!
AAAARGH!
I'M NOT LIKE YOUR OTHER YOUKAI SLAVES.
I BITE WHEN PROVOKED.
HARUKA-- CHAN, WAIT UP- I'M GOING WITH YOU!
AND THE CHECK SIR?
PUT IT ON YOUKO-CHAN'S TAB.
HM...
510
.....

SPLENDID. NOW EVEN THE MEDIA HAS NOTICED ME.
HEH HEH HEH.
IF I'M TO STAY IN THE LIMELIGHT, MY SHOW'S LINEUP NEEDS FRESH BLOOD

NOT ONLY IS HE A PRICK, HE'S COMPLETELY ABUSIVE
IS IT JUST ME, OR IS FOLLOWING THE ONE WHO NAMED US ONE OF THE YOUKAI'S STUPIDEST TRAITS?
HAIR - DR
太平洋攻防戦
ジェームスキクニー主演
館本日?

WHAT'S THE MATTER, HARUKA-CHAN?
.....


I HAVE TO GO BACK. I LEFT... MY TEA BOWL BEHIND.
And for that I hate myself
MIND YOUR POSSESSIONS WHEN LEAVING THE HOUSE! ♡

I-I CAN'T GET MY EARS OUT, EITHER!
Whoa!
I can't unseal my wings.
MY POWERS HAVE BEEN RESTRICTED.
...DAMMIT.

SUCH IS THE RISK...
...OF DEFYING OUR MASTER
BUMP
!
RELAX. YOU'RE A GOOD-LOOKING GUY--THAT'S PLENTY TO GET YOU BY IN THE HUMAN WORLD.
KEEP IT TOGETHER, HARUKA-CHAN!
I HAVE NO POWERS OR TEA!
INSTEAD, I HAVE HATE!
AN OUTLET. EXCELLENT.
HEY! DID YOU JUST BUMP INTO ME?!
LET ME PROVE...
...THAT I HAVE PLENTY OF SKILLS BEYOND MAGIC.

Have mercy, sir!
I'M STILL ANGRY.
STAND UP.
I SEE MY SEARCH HAS PROVEN FRUITFUL.
WHAT A CONVENIENT FUSS.
スッ
HUH?
YEEGH!
S-somebody! Stop the psycho in the suit!
Fight!
Awesome!

THIS IS BASE.
THE DEMON-EATING TENGU OF LEGEND SHOULDN'T BOTHER WITH PETTY HUMANS
I'M NOT ENTER-TAINED YET.
YOU EQUATE VIOLENCE TO ENTERTAINMENT?
!
I DIDN'T ASK YOU, YOU—
COME WITH ME FOR *REAL* ENTERTAINMENT I'LL TAKE YOU SOMEPLACE NIIIICE

?!
WHERE AM I?
...HMN?
...DEMON-EATING TENGU.
WELCOME TO MY SHOWCASE...
YOU KNOW ABOUT ME?

YOUR REPUTATION PRECEDES YOU. WHAT I DON'T UNDERSTAND IS HOW ANYONE BROKE THE SEAL OF THE STRONGEST OF THE YOUKAI.
IT WASN'T THAT BOY YOU WERE WITH, WAS IT? HE SEEMED BARELY CAPABLE OF BREAKING THE SEAL ON A PICKLE JAR
HOW DID HE FREE YOU?
AND IS HE THE ONE WHO NAMED YOU?
GO AWAY.
TSK TSK. AH, WELL— SO I CAN'T NAME YOU.
"DEMON-EATING TENGU" IS DELICIOUSLY IN CONTRAST TO YOUR BEAUTIFUL FACE, ANYWAY.
YOU'RE GOING TO INCREASE MY FAME TENFOLD.
DON'T...

...TOUCH ME!
WHAT?!
HA HA! I SEE YOU'VE MET MY MAGIC BARRIER.
RELAX, MY NEW PET. I HAVE COUNTLESS DEMONS FOR YOU TO FEAST ON
THUD THUD THUD
DAMMIT! SINCE WHEN CAN THESE HOLD ME?!
DO YOU?

KAN-CHAN!
KAN-CHAN, KAN-CHAN!
KAN-CHAN KAN-CHAN KAN-CHAN!
SOMEONE KIDNAPPED HARUKA-CHAN!
WELL, WELL. LOOK WHO CAN'T LIVE WITHOUT ME.
COME ALONG, YOUKO-CHAN

AND NOW...FOR TODAY'S MAIN EVENT ...
AS HIS NAME PROCLAIMS, THIS MERCILESS CREATURE WILL DEVOUR ANY DEMON!
THE BEAST OF LEGEND...
THE DEMON-EATING TENGU!

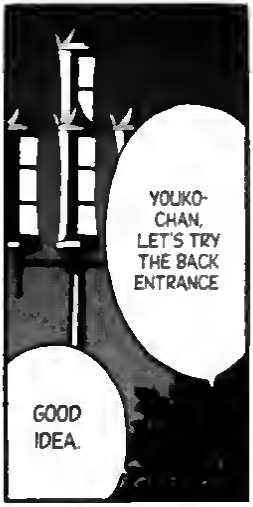
THIS IS GONNA BE GREAT!
THAT'S A YOUKAI?!
WOW! HE'S REALLY HOT FOR A TENGU!
NOW... WATCH HIM FEAST UPON THE FLESH OF THE LIVING!
M-MY APOLOGIES, AUDIENCE. LET'S MOVE ON
Bool
Bool
WHAT?!
?!
Look-I think they're arguing.
Gimme back my money!
I SAID I'M NOT HUNGRY.
Bool
I FETCHED HIM JUST FOR YOU-- NO NEED TO BE SHY.
I'M NOT HUNGRY.

I THINK THE SHOW JUST ENDED.
THIS IS THAT SHOWCASE PLACE?
妖怪見世物
WHY *AREN'T* I HUNGRY?
I STILL REMEMBER THE SMELL AND TASTE OF BLOOD...
IS SOMETHING WRONG WITH ME?

I CAN'T IMAGINE A PRETTY BOY SCARFING DOWN A DEMON.
I DUNNO-- I KINDA WANTED TO SEE IT.
Ha Ha Ha!

MAYBE HE *WAS* FAKE. WHO CARES? THAT TENGU WAS CUTE!
Kyaa!
Kya!

CLUNK


YOUKO-CHAN, LET'S TRY THE BACK ENTRANCE
GOOD IDEA.

NOW I AM HUNGRY.
HMPH.

YOU CAN USE YOUR TEA BOWL, HARUKA.
THEN YOU CAN COME HOME WITH ME, AND WE'LL EAT TOGETHER

.....!

SHE'S OFF FREEING THE OTHERS AS WE SPEAK.
YOUKO-CHAN TOLD ME. WELL, SHE ONLY KNEW THAT YOU'D BEEN ABDUCTED, BUT WHERE ELSE WOULD A MISSING YOUKAI BE WHEN A SHOWCASE OF CAGED YOUKAI IS IN TOWN?
HOW DID YOU KNOW I WAS HERE?
I CAN'T BELIEVE HE LOCKED YOU UP IN HERE.
ARE YOU OKAY? THAT UNETHICAL ASSHOLE.
Poor little tengu!

I CAN'T STAY MAD AT YOU.
AND MY HOBBY IS BEING A YOUKAI SAVIOR, REMEMBER?
I THOUGHT YOU WERE MAD AT ME.
SIGH.
I THINK ALL THOSE LECTURES OF YOURS ARE STARTING TO INFLUENCE ME.
.....
SURE OH, BY THE WAY-- DID HE NAME YOU?
NO. THE OWNER OF THIS PLACE SAID HE COULDN'T.
BUT I'M LOCKED IN THROUGH SOME MAGIC BARRIER.
?
ANYWAY, LET ME OUT.

WAIT. THAT LOOKS LIKE A...REVERSED HAKKEIKYOU!
IT'S A FENG SHUI COMPASS, HARUKA.
WOW ALTHOUGH I GUESS IT MAKES SENSE--IF HE CAN'T NAME YOU, HE NEEDS A BARRIER
YOU INSUBORDINATE TENGU! HOW DARE YOU RUIN MY MAGNIFICENT SHOW?!
YOU'RE EATING THAT DEMON TOMORROW WHETHER YOU LIKE IT OR--
YOU!

HARUKA IS MINE, SIR.
SHUT YOUR MOUTH! THAT TENGU IS--
FWIP
HARUKA IS *MINE*.

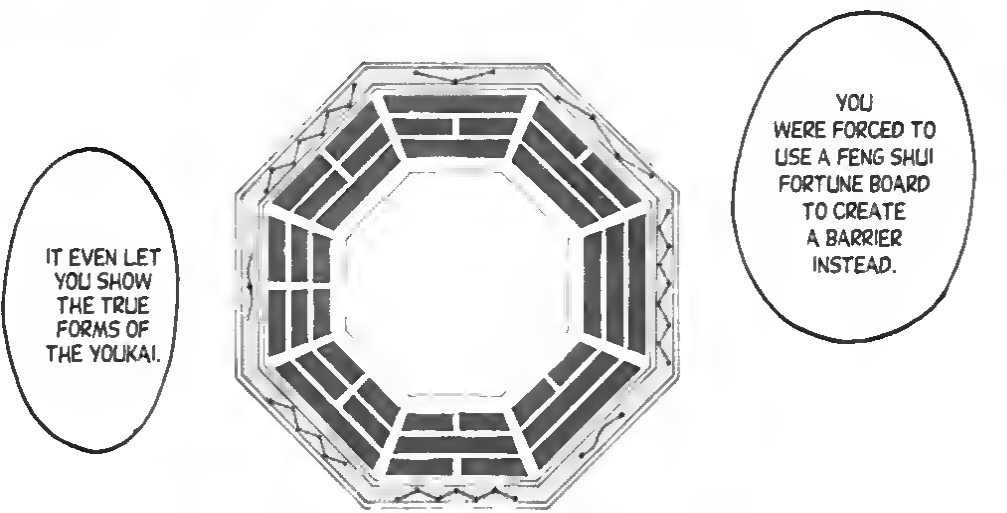
KANTAROU!!

HE'S ALL YOURS, HARUKA!

YOU CONFINED ME.
I DIDN'T LIKE THAT.
BUT I MOSTLY DON'T LIKE YOU.
AAAGH!
Save me!
WHOA-KAY. THAT'S PLENTY, HARUKA.
EEEEP!

WHAT?!
...I THINK YOU'RE A YOUKAI.
Y-YOU'RE RIGHT! MY TEA BOWL!

YOUKAI CAN'T DO IT TO EACH OTHER.
ONLY HUMANS CAN ACKNOWLEDGE AND NAME YOUKAI.


IT EVEN LET YOU SHOW THE TRUE FORMS OF THE YOUKAI.
YOU WERE FORCED TO USE A FENG SHUI FORTUNE BOARD TO CREATE A BARRIER INSTEAD.

IN ORDER TO BIND HARUKA, YOU SET A FLAME ON THE DIRECTION OF HIGHEST MISFORTUNE.

ALL I NEEDED WAS TO PUT OUT THAT FLAME TO FREE HIM.

ON A FORTUNE BOARD, THERE ARE DIRECTIONS FOR BOTH LUCK AND DISASTER FOR WHOMEVER IT'S DESIGNED.

Candle

FOR YOUR *WEAK* YOUKAI, YOU PUT CANDLES IN THE DIRECTION OF MILD LUCK-- IT STRENGTHENED THE LOT OF THEM JUST ENOUGH TO TAKE FORM.

The fortune board in Haruka's case.

I'LL NEVER DO IT AGAIN!
FORGIVE ME, PLEASE!
THEN EXPLAIN YOURSELF.
A TANUKI?
WHY DID YOU DO THIS? MONEY HAS NO VALUE TO YOU.
I-I'VE BEEN ALONE SINCE I WAS BORN.
I WANTED TO GAIN FAME SO I'D BE SURROUNDED BY OTHERS.

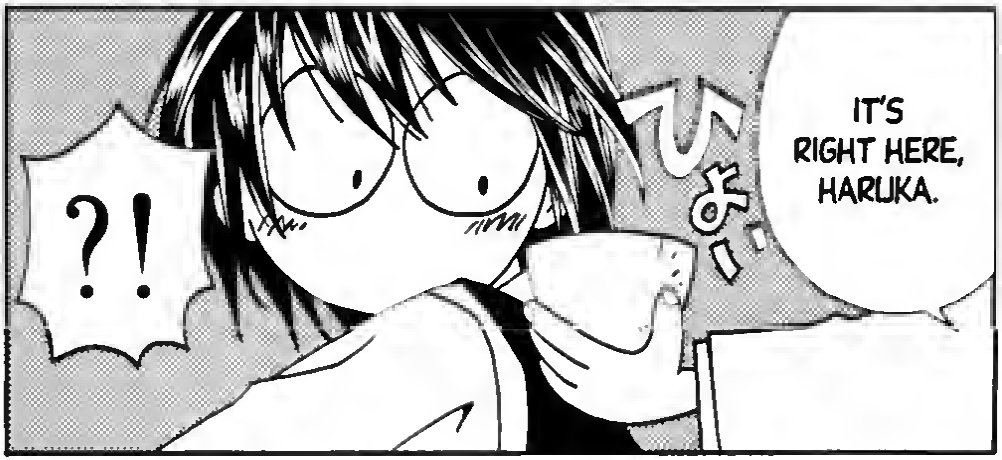
AND YOU HAD TO TORTURE YOUR OWN KIND IN ORDER TO GAIN THAT FAME
THINK ABOUT IT-- YOU WERE GAINING FAME FOR A FAKE VERSION OF YOU.
SIGH
THAT'S ASININE.
YOU SHOULD BE LOOKING FOR QUALITY OF LOVE, NOT QUANTITY.
THINK YOUR PLANS THROUGH, WILL YOU?
IF IT'S REAL LOVE...
...YOU ONLY NEED IT FROM ONE CREATURE.

I OPENED THE CAGES, BUT THEY WON'T LEAVE.
But we wanna! Let us ooout!
POOF
WE'RE FREE, WE'RE FREE!
LET'S ALL GO HOME!
I'D LIKE TO SEE THAT ON A SCROLL IN SOMEONE'S LIVING ROOM.

KAN-CHAN, AMEFURI-KOZOU CAME BACK!
THANK YOU SO MUCH!

SQUEAL SQUEAL
MY TEA BOWL...

CHAW CHAW CHAW
I'M SO HAPPY!
Please stop that.
I'M HAPPY IF YOU ARE.


?!
IT'S RIGHT HERE, HARUKA.

THEN...HOW FAR AHEAD DID YOU PLAN FOR THIS?
AHem!
LIKE I WOULD SMASH SOMETHING THAT IMPORTANT TO YOU, HARUKA.
WHAT?! BUT... I SAW IT BREAK!
I BROKE A FAKE ONE.
DID YOU PLAN THAT FIGHT IN THE CAFE?
I'M PROUD OF YOU, HARUKA! YEAH, THIS WAS ALL A SETUP--I KNEW THE OWNER WANTED YOU, SO YOU WERE MY GUINEA PIG TO DISCOVER HOW HE CONTROLLED THE YOUKAI.
How could he resist stealing an angry and preoccupied tengu?
KAN-CHAN!
ドン
.....

NOOO!
ICHINOMIYA-SENSEI? I'M HERE FOR THE MANUSCRIPT.
NOT A CENT!
Hff Haa
HELLO, YOUKO-CHAN. DID YOU FIND IT?
HE MENTIONED SOMETHING ABOUT EXPENSIVE STAGE COSTS
Now those repair costs are coming outta my paycheck!
AARGH!
THAT STUPID TANUKI'S AS BROKE AS THE REST OF US!
SIP
DON'T YOU HUMANS SAY THERE'S NO SUCH THING AS EASY MONEY?
WHAT?! WHAT HAVE YOU BEEN DOING THIS WHOLE TIME?!
QUICK— SOMEBODY HIDE ME!

AND HOW *DOES* ONE PERFORM THIS PURIFICATION?
...AND SO, IF WE PURIFY OURSELVES OF OUR SINS, BLAME, DISGRACE, AND WICKED THOUGHTS, WE CAN GET CLOSER TO THE GODS WITHIN US.
OOOOH!
IT'S SIMPLE.
KOTODAMA!
OOH!
YOU'VE PROVEN YOUR MASTERY OF THE SUBJECT-
VERY ELOQUENTLY SAID ICHINOMIYA-SENSEI
CLAP
CLAP
CLAP
CLAP

南无阿弥陀佛
南无阿弥陀佛
CHAPTER 3

tactics

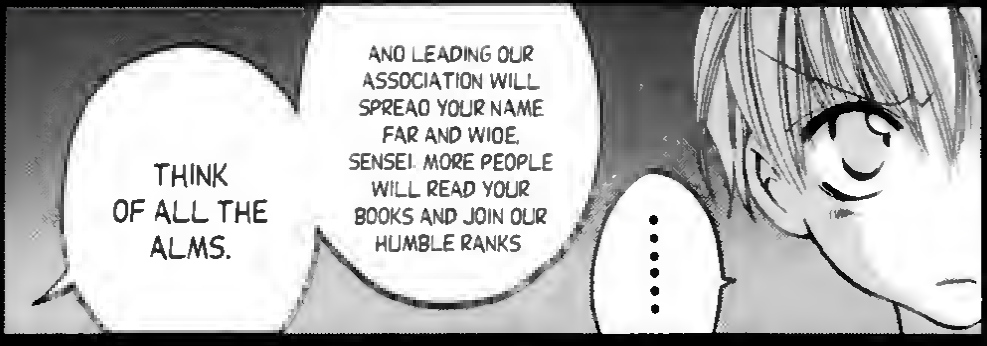
I'M THE EMBODIMENT OF PERFECT! IT'S ALMOST UNFAIR!
DRUMROLL... VICTORIOUS!
UM.. SENSEI?
I ADMIT THAT I'M STILL ABLE TO SURPRISE MYSELF.
THANK YOU.
HUFF
HUFF
THANK YOU FOR SELECTING ME TO BE HEAD OF THE KOTODAMA ASSOCIATION.
YOU WON'T REGRET IT.
Unity!
.....

UGH.
I CAN'T BELIEVE HE'S RUNNING A RELIGION NOW.
I DON'T UNDERSTAND THE SUDDEN INTEREST.
And I barely understand Him in general.
HOW DID IT COME TO THIS?

WAIT A MINUTE.
I GET A RELIGION?
pfft!
THAT'S RIGHT, SENSEI! WE OF THE KOTODAMA ASSOCIATION READ YOUR BOOK AND REALIZED IT IMMEDIATELY.
YOU'RE THE ONLY POSSIBLE VANGUARD FOR US IN THIS WORLD!
I SMELL RATS.
THEM AND NO ONE ELSE, ACCORDING TO THE ROYALTIES.
YOU FLATTER ME, SIR YOU REALLY LIKED MY BOOK?

IS THAT THE PROBLEM? WELL, LET ME TELL YOU SOMETHING
I work, you prick!
Then let me eat demons!
I'M HONORED SIR BUT I'M AFRAID I'M TOO BUSY WITH MY FOLKLORE RESEARCH AND SIDE JOB
PLUS I HAVE MOUTHS TO FEED

BEING A PROPHET IS VERY LUCRATIVE.


THINK OF ALL THE ALMS.
AND LEADING OUR ASSOCIATION WILL SPREAD YOUR NAME FAR AND WIDE, SENSEI. MORE PEOPLE WILL READ YOUR BOOKS AND JOIN OUR HUMBLE RANKS
.....

BLAH
BLAH
BLAH
WE'RE ON THE VERGE OF BEING RECOGNIZED AS AN OFFICIAL RELIGION.
OUR ORGANIZATION IS ALREADY ERECTING A NEW SHRINE ON THE OUTSKIRTS.
!
I'D LIKE TO AGREE.
I CAN BLOW THEM OUT THE DOOR IF YOU'D LIKE, KANTAROU..
OKAY, NO. KAN-CHAN MAY BE AN ASSHOLE, BUT EVEN HE'S NOT EVIL ENOUGH TO RUN A RELIGION FOR MONEY.
!?
tea
I SUPPOSE I CAN MULTITASK. TIME TO LEAD SOME LAMBS!

THANK YOU SO MUCH, SENSEI! YOU'RE ALL WE HOPED YOU'D BE!
Are you okay?
WHAT'S WRONG WITH YOU, KAN-CHAN?!
YOU JUST DON'T LIKE NEW RELIGIONS BECAUSE THEY'RE DIFFERENT. EVERY-ONE WAS AGAINST WESTERNIZATION AT THE BEGINNING OF THE MEIJI ERA, TOO.
It's time for me to premiere as the sacred virgin that I am.
SOMETIMES YOU WORRY ME.
ANYWAY, THIS WORLD ISN'T JUST DIFFICULT FOR YOUKAI TO LIVE IN
HUMANS NEED SAVIORS, TOO.
??
LOVE OF COIN ENSLAVES US!

AW. WHAT A NICE SHRINE!
AND THIS SECLUDED LANDSCAPE IS BEAUTIFUL, ISN'T IT?
SAY IT'S BEAUTIFUL, HARUKA ♥
"HARUKA♥" MY ASS! YOUR WORSHIPPERS ARE DISTURBING, KANTAROU.
Long Live Ichinomiya-sensei!
YOU CALL THAT "KOTODAMA"[2] IS THAT PART OF YOUR DOCTRINE?
HEY, THEY WERE ALREADY DOING THAT WHEN I GOT HERE.
ICHI-NOM-IYA-SENSEI!

DON'T TRIP, CHAIRMAN.
I'VE BROUGHT THE BOY I MENTIONED, SENSEI.
WILL YOU STILL MEET HIM?
HUH? THAT'S ODD.
THERE WAS NOTHING TO TRIP ON.
CAREFUL, THERE
HA HA HA HA!
I-I'M SHINNOSUKE USAMI, ICHINOMIYA-SENSEI.
I'M A BIG FAN OF YOURS!
I CAME TO ASK IF I COULD PARTAKE OF YOUR GRACIOUS WORDS.

ANY-THING SAID...
...WILL BECOME REALITY.
.....
INDEED, SENSEI!
HE'S A PRIME POTENTIAL CONVERT, I TAKE IT.
HELP ME WITH THIS.
YOU'RE KANTAROU'S FAN?
I WONDER IF IT'S FINALLY TIME FOR SHINNOSUKE TO JOIN US.
THAT'S THE POWER OF KOTODAMA, CHAIRMAN.
WOW, SENSEI! CAN YOU REALLY DO THAT?!
VESSEL? ME?
NOW THEN, SHINNOSUKE. WE'LL HAVE A GOD DESCEND UPON THIS VESSEL, AND WE'LL TRY TO SEE YOUR FORTUNE

DAMMIT, KANTAROU!
I TOLD YOU THAT I WANT NOTHING TO DO WITH YOUR RELIGION!
YOU'RE JUST AFRAID THAT I'LL BEAT YOU.
I'M REALLY LOOKING FORWARD TO WHAT MY DIVINE MESSAGE WILL SAY.

SHINNOSUKE, HAVE YOU EVER GONE SWIMMING AND THEN HAD WATER GO UP YOUR NOSE?
UM... SURE.
AND YOU DISLIKED IT AND COMPLAINED, DIDN'T YOU? OH, IT'S WORSE THAN I THOUGHT.
D-DID I DO SOMETHING WRONG?
THAT MEANS THE WATER GOD HAS DESCENDED.
THERE'S WATER COMING FORTH FROM THE VESSEL.
WHAT?!
GOD'S ORACLE FOR SHINNOSUKE HAS ARRIVED.
YOU HAVE A PHOBIA OF WATER.
うき
うき
うき
!

CURSE YOU, KANTA-ROU.
HAH HAH
HAH HAH
SEE HOW THE VESSEL IS SUFFERING!
ARGH!
IT'S PROOF THAT THE WATER GOD IS SUFFERING
EVEN IF YOU DISLIKE IT, YOU HAVE TO EMBRACE THE NOSE WATER AND TELL IT THAT YOU LOVE IT. ♥
CLAP CLAP!
IT MAKES PERFECT SENSE, ICHINOMIYA-SENSEI!
SO YOU MUSTN'T EVER REFUSE THE WATER, RIGHT? BRILLIANT!
K-KANTAROU *DID* BEAT ME. HE'S SOME KIND OF FIEND
HOW WAS HE ABLE KEEP HIS FACE IN THE WASH BASIN THAT LONG?
straw
THE LITTLE BASTARD CHEATED.

GASP
I CAN'T SPEED-EAT SOMETHING BOILING.
SLIRP SLIRP SLIRP
NEXT IS THE SPEED-EATING OF BOILED NOODLES IN BROTH.
TODAY WILL BE UDON.
OH! ER...
MY FACE!
SHINNOSUKE, HAVE YOU EVER BURNED YOUR TONGUE WHILE EATING SOMETHING HOT? THAT'S WHAT THE VESSEL'S FEELING RIGHT NOW
IT BURNS!
Tee Hee!
I-I HAVE, SENSEI. I LOVE RAMEN MYSELF.
SOMETIMES I GET EXCITED AND TAKE THE FIRST SIP TOO EARLY.
HOW DID YOU KNOW?

I SEE, SENSE!! YOU'RE SAYING THAT WE SHOULD EXPRESS OUR GRATITUDE FOR THE FOOD THE GODS GRANT US BY EATING SLOWLY AND LOVINGLY!
OF COURSE! I'LL NEVER RUSH TO EAT AGAIN!
WILL YOU?
THEY DO SAY TENGU CAN HOLD AN UNGODLY AMOUNT OF LIQUOR.
I WILL *KILL* YOU IN THE ALCOHOL TEST, KANTAROU.
PLEASE, KAN-CHAN. YOU'RE BETTER THAN THIS.
Where the steam from Kan-chan's lukewarm noodles came from.
HERE WE ARE.
ANOTHER MESSAGE FROM GOD FOR SHINNOSUKE.
Cask

I GET IT! EVEN IF YOU DRINK SAKE, DON'T GET DRUNK!
Right?
THAT'S THE SPIRIT, SHINNOSUKE!
YOU'VE GOT IT!
NRRRGH.. YOU ALL NEED TO STOP MOVING AROUND SO MUCH.. SIT STILL, DAMMIT!
ICHINOMIYA-SENSEI IS AS AMAZING AS YOU GUYS SAID.
His truths are so true!
THEN PLEASE, SHINNOSUKE-- JOIN OUR ASSOCIATION.
HUH?
Join Join Join
JOIN..
THE FAITH?

!
IF YOU COULD JUST BEGIN BY HANDING OVER YOUR BOOK
YOU'LL CONVERT, WON'T YOU?
SHINNOSUKE'S FATHER WAS AN AUTHORITY IN KOTODAMA STUDIES.
THAT BOOK IS A COMPILATION OF HIS THEORIES. OUR SECT WOULD LOVE TO PARTAKE OF HIS WISDOM.
WHAT IS THAT BOOK?
IT'S OKAY-- I'LL GO GET HIM. YOU CAN LISTEN TO HARUKA'S DIVINE SERMON IN THE MEANTIME.
SHINNO-SUKE!
I-I STILL DON'T BELIEVE IN KOTODAMA I'M SORRY!
Eeeee!
Fear me, Puny Humans! I am your God!

ICHINOMIYA-SENSEI
WHY DO YOU REJECT KOTODAMA, SHINNOSUKE?
THERE YOU ARE
LET'S TALK, SHINNOSUKE
カサ…
...DO *YOU* REALLY BELIEVE IN IT, SENSEI?

I CAN'T BELIEVE THAT.
HAVEN'T YOU NOTICED THAT WORDS MOVE PEOPLE?
OF COURSE I DO.
MY FATHER MAY HAVE BEEN A KOTODAMA SCHOLAR, BUT HIS WORDS NEVER MOVED ME.
IN THE LAST YEARS OF HIS LIFE, HE BECAME SO BUSY WITH THIS AND THE PSYCHOLOGY PROGRAM HE PICKED UP THAT HE NEVER CAME HOME TO TALK TO ME, ANYWAY.
I'M MORE INTERESTED IN FOLKLORE STUDIES.
I LIKE YOUR BOOKS ON YOUKAI SENSEI! I LOVE HOW YOU MAKE IT SEEM LIKE YOUKAI COULD REALLY BE OUT THERE.
I'VE GOT TWO AT HOME MYSELF.
HA HA HA HA HA HA HA

FOR EXAMPLE, SAYING THE WORD "CUT" AT A MARRIAGE CEREMONY IS SEEN AS TABOO SINCE IT COULD "CUT THE BOND BETWEEN THE NEWLYWEDS." RIGHT? JUST AS IT'S TABOO TO SAY "FAIL" AROUND STUDENTS IN THE MIDDLE OF EXAMS.
MAKING CERTAIN WORDS TABOO IS A SIGN OF THE INHERITANCE OF KOTODAMA NOTIONS
BUT YOU HAVE TO UNDERSTAND-- KOTODAMA STUDIES RELATE TO FOLKLORE.
DO THEY?
STUDYING FOLKLORE IS INVESTIGATING JAPANESE CUSTOMS, RIGHT?
I ACTUALLY CAN'T READ THE THING.
ISN'T THAT CONCEPT MENTIONED IN THE BOOK YOU'RE ALWAYS CARRYING?
THOUGH I CAN READ THE PART ON THE LAST PAGE THAT SAYS "IT MAY BE MANY DAYS..."
SOMETIMES I THINK IT'S IN A FOREIGN LANGUAGE.
IT'S WRITTEN WITH A LOT OF WORDS I DON'T UNDERSTAND
FLIP
FLIP
FLIP
!

YEAH. IT'S THE LAST THING IN THIS BOOK, AND MY NAME IS WRITTEN AFTER IT.
DOES IT REALLY SAY THAT?
I CAN'T HELP BUT THINK THAT IT'S A MESSAGE FROM MY FATHER EVEN IF I DON'T UNDERSTAND IT...
...I CAN'T BEAR TO PART WITH IT
SHINNOSUKE!
.....

WE WERE FINALLY DISMISSED BY THE DRUNK.
WE HAVE THE CAR, SO LET ME TAKE YOU HOME.
WILL YOU STILL GO TO STOP FOR RAMEN IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT, SHINNOSUKE?
OF COURSE! WHEN I HEAR THE SOUND OF THE RAMEN CART'S FLUTE, I NATURALLY START WALKING.
K-CLICK
WHAT HAPPENED TO HARUKA?
S-SENSEI! IN THE BACK SEAT!
PLEASE WAKE HIM, SENSEI! WE'D REALLY LIKE TO LEAVE.
AW. HE MUST'VE CRAWLED IN BECAUSE IT'S COMFY.
AND HE SCARES US!
YEEK!!
DAMN! MY FOOT TURNED INTO A MACKEREL!

ANGEL?!
HE SLEEPS LIKE A LITTLE ANGEL.
Squeal!

WHUMP
ZZZZ...

WAIT... THAT'S NOT SO BAD.

I THINK WAKING HIM UP IS AN EXCELLENT IDEA!
B-BUT WAIT, ICHINOMIYA-SENSEI!
I'D FEEL BAD IF I WOKE HIM UP LET ME TAKE SHIN-CHAN HOME.

VROOOM
DAMN.

IF YOU'RE UNKIND TO HARUKA, ROCKS WILL RAIN DOWN UPON YOU.

AAAGH!
ROCKS ARE RAINING DOWN UPON ME!
NOOOO!
WHAT?! MR. HARUKA IS THE DEMON-EATING TENGU?!
LET'S EXCHANGE PRESENTS, LITTLE SEA LOUSE
HEH HEH
THE LEGENDARY ONE YOU WROTE ABOUT IN YOUR BOOK, SENSEI?!
HE WAS YOUR MODEL FOR THE CONCEPT, YOU MEAN.
NOT EXACTLY.
NYUM
NYUM

THAT'S ACTUALLY HIM.
HE'S REAL. HEH HEH.
HUH?!

WHAT THE HELL IS THIS?!

TAKE THIS! HA HA!
S-STOP, SENSEI!
DIE!
STILL KICKING, ARE WE?
WHAT'S GOING ON?!
BWA HA HA HA!
IS HE CHALLENGING ME? ON THE ROAD?!
FOOLISH mortal
MR. HARUKA?
...OW.
MR. HARUKA! BRACE YOURSELF--IT'S AN EMERGENCY!

I WAS *TRYING* TO *SLEEP.*
AGH!
WHAT... THE HELL?!
HE REALLY *IS* THE TENGU!

BASH
YOU CRAZY... YAAAH!
HMPH. FOOLS

tactics 1

SENSEI!
panicking
OH.
GOOD WORK, HARUKA.
AH, REVENGE FEELS SO SWEET.
IT LOOKS LIKE YOU'RE BEING TARGETED, SHINNOSUKE.
BUT WHO WOULD BE AFTER ME?
IF YOU NEED PROTECTION CARRY THIS WITH YOU.
WHAT IS IT?

IT'S A TENGU CHARM.
...I STILL CAN'T BELIEVE TENGU REALLY EXIST.
LET ME SHOW YOU...
...THE TRUE POWER OF KOTODAMA.
HEH.
WHEN THIS JOB IS OVER, I'LL TEACH YOU THE MEANING OF THE LAST WORDS IN YOUR BOOK
YOU UNDERSTAND IT, SENSEI?!

And my head hurts.
DAMN THAT KANTAROU.
I MAY BE HIS SERVANT, BUT I STILL HAVE LIMITS.
GAGH!
LONG LIVE SENSEI!
LONG LIVE THE ASSOCIATION!
ire
ire
ire
THAT'S HOW THEY TRAIN?
UNSETTLING
HUMAN!
LONG LIVE SENSEI! LONG LIVE THE ASSOCIATION!
たたた

ARE YOU HERE, KANTAROU?
WHAT IS THIS, A TEA PARTY?
DON'T YOU HAVE WISDOM TO IMPART?
IT'S THE DEMON-EATING TENGU! YAY!
HUH?
THIS IS SO EXCITING!
HE'S REALLY POWERFUL!
AND SUPER-DUPER FAMOUS!
KAN-CHAN, YOU'RE HIS MASTER?
TEE HEE!
KAN-CHAN'S SO STRONG!

Kan-
cHaaaan!
SHUT UP!
He's scary like the legends!
And go home!
THROB
STOP DRAGGING ME INTO YOUR--
TAKE IT EASY, HARUKA.
YOU HAD A LONG, INEBRIATED NIGHT. WOULD YOU LIKE SOME TEA?
...YES. SHUT UP.
Make it strong.

WAIT.
WHERE'S MY TEA BOWL?
AH! THE nature OF tea.
OH, THAT? I LENT IT TO SHINNOSUKE.
Eek.
SLAM!
MY BOOOOWL!
HE'S IN A RESIDENTIAL AREA, SO NO THUNDER, PLEASE!

YOU'RE IN LUCK, BOY.
I KNEW IT I CAN'T RESIST ONCE I HEAR THAT FLUTE!
TOOT TOOOOT
mew!
Chinese Ramen
YOU'RE JUST IN TIME...
...FOR TONIGHT'S SPECIAL.
HUH?
COME WITH US AND WE'LL LET YOU--
OOF!

YOU.
FANBOY.
WHO WAS THAT?!
AAGH!
M-MR. HARUKA! WHY ARE YOU—

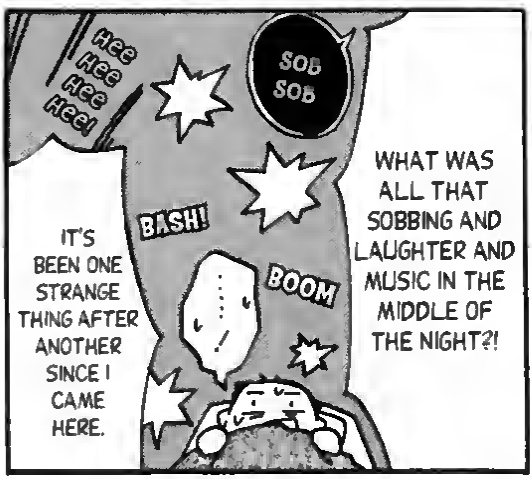
GIVE ME THE BOWL!
THE TEA BOWL? OH.. I HAVE IT RIGHT HERE.
.....
I KNOW WHAT YOU'RE UP TO.

WRONG
YOU BASTARDS ARE AFTER MY PRECIOUS TEA BOWL!
(confused)

IF YOU HAVE THE TEA BOWL, WE'RE LEAVING.
MR. HARUKA?
TH-THAT GUY JUST FLEW OFF!
WE CAN'T BEAT A MONSTER!

IT'S ALL STARTING TO COME TOGETHER.
WHAT IS, SENSEI?
DO YOU KNOW WHO'S AFTER ME?!
YOU SHOULD TELL HIM IF YOU DO.
THE MEN AFTER SHINNOSUKE
...ARE AFTER HIS BOOK.
THIS?
THE BOOK.
IT WASN'T MY BOWL?!

THIS HAS GONE FAR ENOUGH.
IT'S TIME FOR A LITTLE DIVINE RETRIBUTION.


Hee Hee Hee Hee!
SOb SOb
BASH!
BOOM
IT'S BEEN ONE STRANGE THING AFTER ANOTHER SINCE I CAME HERE.
WHAT WAS ALL THAT SOBBING AND LAUGHTER AND MUSIC IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT?!

UGH.
I COULDN'T SLEEP A WINK

ICHINOMIYA-SENSEI!!
WHY ARE YOU DRESSED LIKE THAT?
GOOD MORNING, CHAIRMAN.
WE'LL DIRECTLY APPLY THE POWER OF KOTODAMA.
TODAY IS THE DAY WE CONVERT YOUNG SHINNOSUKE.
I...I LOOK FORWARD TO IT.

I JUST... I CAN'T GIVE IT TO YOU!
I *CAN'T*, ALL RIGHT?!
.....
...SO YOU REALLY WANT MY BOOK?
IT'S THE ONE THING YOUR FATHER LEFT BEHIND AND HE WAS AN AUTHORITY ON KOTODAMA STUDIES
WE CONSIDER IT SCRIPTURE

SHINNOSUKE, CHAIRMAN-- PLEASE
WE CAN SEE IF THAT BOOK IS INDEED A PROPER SCRIPTURE.
BY ASKING GOD.
NOT MORE ALCOHOL!
I REFUSE TO DO THIS SOBER
WEEEE...
THAT'S SACRED SAKE. TRUST ME. ♡
SMITE
秋櫻

!
THEY SAY THAT TENGU ARE GIFTED AT SWORDPLAY.
I'LL BET YOU'RE GOOD AT THAT, HARUKA.
WHY DON'T YOU SHOW US YOUR TALENTS?
...THIS IS MORE OF THAT ENTERTAIN-MENT YOU WERE TALKING ABOUT, ISN'T IT?

...kotoyosashi matsuriki.
Kamuakariniha karitamaite
Ogasumemimarto mikotoha toyoashiharano mizuhonokuriwa yasukurito tairakeku shiroshimaese to...
Yaoyorozuno kamitachiwo kamutsudoeri tsuitamai.
Takamagaharani kamuzumarimazu summeragamusu kamurogi kamurormino mikoto wo mochite.

...kokotoakuno tsumidemu.
...kuni tsutsumi...
...ama tsutsumi...
Amenomasu-hitoraga Ayamachio-kashikemu kusagusano-migotoha...
THIS IS A PROBLEM.
HM...IT SEEMS THAT GOD HAS DESCENDED.
WHAT IS IT WITH YOU AND MY BOWL?!
WHA?!
EEK!
AAGH!
?!
BE CAREFUL— ARE YOU TRYING TO KILL ME?!

RaaaaWr!
Gaaaah!
MAYBE YOU ERECTED A RELIGION FOR THE SOLE PURPOSE OF EARNING MONEY.
AND MAYBE YOU TRIED TO STEAL A BOOK TO DEEPEN THAT SIN.
JUST WHAT COULD BE WRITTEN IN THAT BOOK, I WONDER?
EEEK!
AAAH!

SHINNOSUKE HIMSELF SAID THAT HIS FATHER STUDIED PSYCHOLOGY.

A WAY TO MAKE MORE PROFIT USING KOTODAMA?

I DEDUCE THAT SUCH A BOOK IS ACTUALLY ABOUT *BRAINWASHING.*
?!
BUILDING A SHRINE IN A SECLUDED AREA MEANS THE FOLLOWERS ARE ISOLATED-- THE PERFECT GROUNDS FOR BRAINWASHING EARNEST MASSES.
THAT WOULD MAKE SENSE, WOULDN'T IT?

I KNOW THE JOYS OF MONEY. BUT STARTING A RELIGION JUST TO GET RICH?
EVEN I'M NOT THAT EVIL.
YOU INTENDED TO USE THAT BOOK AS A MANUAL. BUT I'M GUESSING YOU WENT INTO DEBT BUILDING THIS SHRINE EARLY; YOU'VE GOTTEN SO DESPERATE FOR THE BOOK THAT YOU'VE GOTTEN SLOPPY.
MAYBE YOUR LOAN PAYMENTS ARE PRESSURING YOU.
DAMMIT. YOU'VE BEEN ON TO ME SINCE THE BEGINNING, HAVEN'T YOU?
I NEVER THOUGHT AN UNPOPULAR ACADEMIC WOULD PLAY ALONG JUST TO EXPOSE ME.
HUH?!
ENOUGH! JUST TAKE THE BOOK FROM HIM BY FORCE!

ANGRY SHINTO GODS!
?!
NOT AGAIN!
NOW IS THE TIME TO UNLEASH YOUR DIVINE WRATH!
YOUR SACRILEGIOUS SHRINE HAS BEEN CURSED, CHAIRMAN.
YOU'RE THE REASON FOR ALL THE STRANGE HAPPENINGS?!

WHAT THE HELL IS THIS?
...DID I JUST LET KANTAROU MANIPULATE ME AGAIN?
!
I-I DON'T KNOW HOW YOU DID IT, BUT--

YOU OF ALL PEOPLE SHOULD KNOW THE POWER OF *WORDS*.
PLEASE, CHAIRMAN.

I Hate tHis! I Hate every-tHing!
THUNK
OW!

BEHOLD!
THUNDER!
I'VE HAD IT, GODDAMMIT!

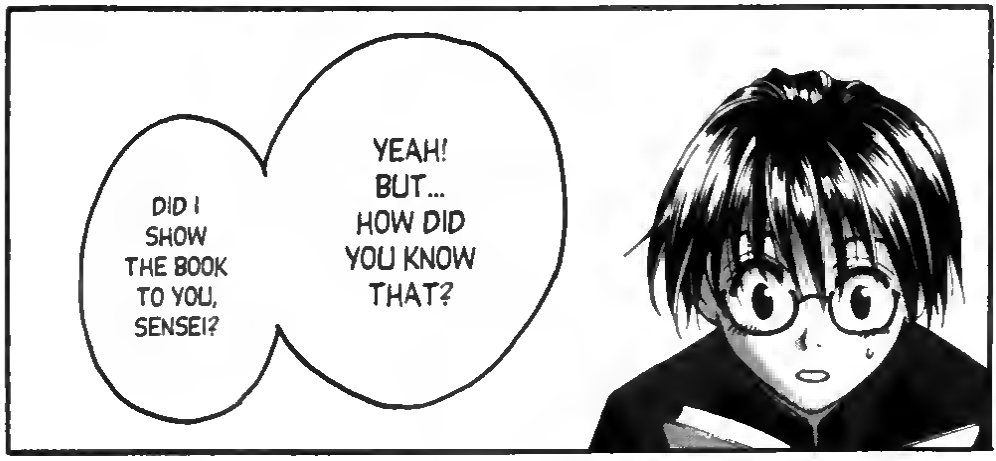
PLEASE FORGIVE ME, MY LIEGE.
I'LL LEAVE THIS SHRINE, THIS LAND, AND I'LL PAY OFF MY DEBTS.
promptly.
GOD FORGIVES AND PROTECTS THOSE WHO KEEP THEIR PROMISES.
NOT TO WORRY, CHAIRMAN.
I THINK IT WAS THE BOOZE THAT DID HIM IN
YOU OKAY HARUKA CHAN?

YOU SAVED US, KAN-CHAN!
YAAY! NEW HOME, NEW HOME!
WHO ARE THEY?
THESE LITTLE GUYS CAME TO ME A LONG TIME AGO.
THEY WANTED A SANCTUARY SO THEY COULD LIVE IN PEACE.

NYOHI NYOHI
THEN YOU WERE HOPING TO SEIZE THE SHRINE FROM THE START
THINK OF IT AS MORE OF A "GROUP PRIZE"
THE WESTERNIZATION MOVEMENT INFLUENCED THE YOUKAI WHO HAD SETTLED INTO HOMES, TOO.
I'M JUST HAPPY YOU'RE NOT THE EMBODIMENT OF MONETARY SIN.
I believed in you!
STOP TRICKING ME INTO HELPING YOU!
REALLY, YOUKO-CHAN.
YOU KNOW MY PRIORITIES LIE WITH YOUKAI.

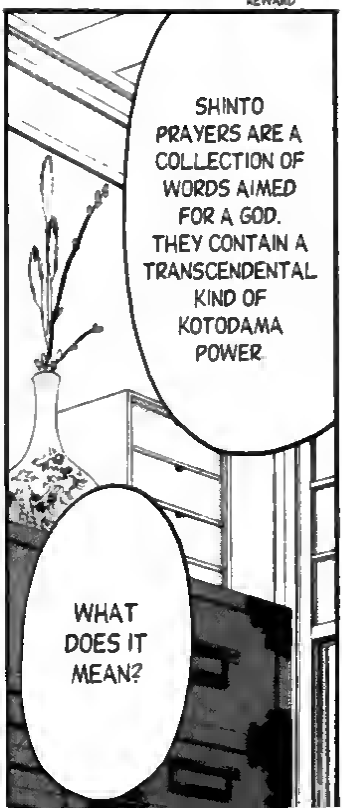
YASOKAHIHA AREDOMO KONNICHI NO IKUHI NO TARUHI NI KAKEMAKU MO KASHIKOMU
OOKAMI NO OOMAE NI KASHIKOMI KASHIKOMI MO MOUSAKU...

OOKAMI NO UJIKO, USAMI SHINNOSUKE.
THAT'S WHAT IT SAYS, RIGHT?


YEAH! BUT... HOW DID YOU KNOW THAT?
DID I SHOW THE BOOK TO YOU, SENSEI?

...IT'S A KOTODAMA WRITTEN TO PROTECT YOU, SHINNOSUKE.

REWARD


SHINTO PRAYERS ARE A COLLECTION OF WORDS AIMED FOR A GOD. THEY CONTAIN A TRANSCENDENTAL KIND OF KOTODAMA POWER
WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

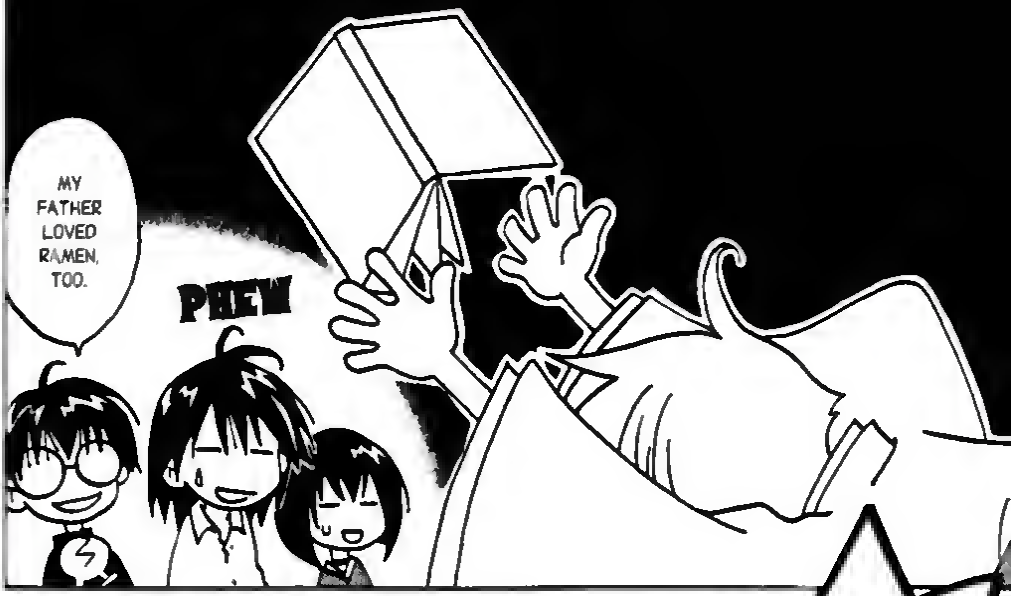
AND THERE YOU HAVE IT.
WORDS CAN HURT, BUT THEY CAN ALSO HEAL.

THAT'S THE POWER OF KOTODAMA.

BUT I DIDN'T KNOW THAT MY FATHER RESEARCHED BRAINWASHING.
NO! DON'T GIVE HIM THE POWER TO--
FOR YOU, SENSEI? ANYTHING.
I *ASSUME* HE RESEARCHED BRAINWASHING. IT WAS THE BEST EXPLANATION FOR WHY THE ASSOCIATION WANTED YOUR BOOK.
MAY I ACTUALLY CHECK?
OH.
IT'S WRITTEN IN SACRED, ANCIENT JAPANESE. NO WONDER YOU COULDN'T READ IT!
HA HA! NOW I GET IT.
SHOCK!
SMILE

But for you who so painstakingly translated this difficult text, I will leave you directions to the finest of ramen restaurants. Starting with Hokkaido to your north...

I have no intention of leaving the technique of brainwashing to future generations.



LET'S GET SOME RAMEN, SENSEI--THAT PLACE *IS* REALLY GOOD.
WHEN DID YOU DECIDE YOU WANTED THE MANUAL? HALFWAY THROUGH YOUR PLAN?
SERVES YOU RIGHT, KAN-CHAN.
THAT'S NOT WHAT I WANTED!

tactics 1 THE END!

tactics

THANKIES!
TO MY EDITOR, MY ASSISTANTS, THOSE OF YOU WHO READ THIS BOOK, MY FAMILY, MISS SAKURA KINOSHITA, KINOSHITA'S MOTHER...THANK YOU!
TACTICS VOLUME ONE IS OFFICIALLY OUT! ♥
YAAAY! HARUKA'S CHANGED, HASN'T HE?
BUT I THINK HE'S JUST GOING TO KEEP CHANGING.
LIFE TAKES LOTS OF PRACTICE--I'LL KEEP TRYING MY BEST. MY BEST REGARDS FROM NOW ON, TOO!
BY KAZUKO HIGASHIYAMA

tactics
postscripts

tactics
postscripts

HELLO AND NICE TO MEET YOU.
THIS IS SAKURA KINOSHITA.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR BUYING *TACTICS* VOLUME ONE. THE BOOK HAS BEEN COMPILED AT LONG LAST.

SINCE CHAPTER ONE WAS WRITTEN OVER A YEAR AGO, I CAN'T HELP BUT BE REALLY EMBARRASSED BY IT. BUT SINCE I PUT MY HEART AND SOUL INTO IT AT THE TIME, I HAVE NO REGRETS.

I HAVE TO ASK FOR YOUR KINDNESS FROM HERE ON OUT AS WELL.

HIGASHIYAMA, THANK YOU FOR COLLABORATING WITH AN IDIOT LIKE ME.

MY EDITOR, I'M SORRY FOR ALWAYS MAKING YOU TAKE CARE OF ME.

AND MY ASSISTANTS, I'M SORRY I'M SO DISAPPOINTING.

I'LL CONTINUE TO WORK DILIGENTLY, SO PLEASE BEAR WITH ME!

JULY 2002
SAKURA
KINOSHITA

IN THE NEXT VOLUME OF

tactics

As Kantarou continues to rove the countryside looking for youkai problems to solve, Haruka is surprised to discover that along with his desire to eat demons being quelled, he has no memories about why he ended up sealed away for so long, or who sealed him in the first place. Not only is he suddenly denying his inner nature (he is supposed to be the "Demon-Eating" tengu, after all!), but even a trip to the hot springs and an encounter with an old friend can't seem to shake the pieces of his memory back into place. The plot thickens as a foreign priest comes to Japan, and a strange little girl appears, uttering what sounds like ominous prophesies!

LANGUAGE AND CULTURE NOTES ON TACTICS!

CHAPTER 1

~JUST WHAT ARE TENGU, ANYWAY? TENGU ARE POPULAR FIGURES OF JAPANESE FOLKLORE, OFTEN PORTRAYED AS WINGED MEN WITH LONG, KNOBBY NOSES AND VERY RED FACES. THE CHARACTERS FOR TENGU LITERALLY MEAN "HEAVENLY DOG," BUT TENGU ARE TYPICALLY BIRD-LIKE FIGURES, WITH BEAKS AND WINGS. THEY'RE POWERFUL FIGHTERS, AND THEIR STATUS AS DEMONIC OR BENEVOLENT FIGURES HAS CHANGED SIGNIFICANTLY OVER THE CENTURIES.

~THE MISTAKEN IDENTITY OF HARUKA'S RESTING PLACE COMES FROM A MISREADING OF THE KANJI CHARACTERS USED ON THE SHRINE. TENKO IS THE TWO KANJI-COMBO OF "HEAVENLY" AND "FOX" INDICATING A FOX POSSESSED BY A DEITY AND SO GIVEN SUPERNATURAL POWERS, AND IS WRITTEN AS, 天狐. THE VILLAGERS, HOWEVER, SAW 天狗 TENGU, WRITTEN ON THE SIGN BESIDE HARUKA'S SACRED ROCK, AND MISREAD THE SECOND CHARACTER. OOPS.

~ENKI, THE SPECIFIC KIND OF DEMON THAT KANTAROU GOES UP AGAINST IN CHAPTER 1, IS WRITTEN WITH A COMBO OF THE KANJI FOR "MALICE/GRUDGE" AND "DEMON": 怨鬼.

-HARUKA'S NAME, AS KANTAROU INITIALLY ENVISIONED IT, WAS A PLAY OFF OF THE FACT THAT SUPPOSEDLY THE DEMON-EATING TENGU IS "FAR" MORE POWERFUL THAN OTHER YOUKAI, AND WRITTEN ONE WAY, HARUKA MEANS "FAR, REMOTE, DISTANT." (遥) UNFORTUNATELY FOR HARUKA, IT CAN ALSO BE WRITTEN AS A PARTICULARLY GIRLY NAME, USING THE KANJI OF "SPRING" AND "FLOWER," AS WE SEE ON PAGE 42.

~YOUKO'S NAME IS A PUN TOO, SINCE IT TAKES THE "KO" FROM TENKO, AND ADDS THE "YO" FROM YOUKAI AT THE FRONT (妖狐). RATHER THAN A MORE TYPICAL FEMININE SPELLING.

CHAPTER 2:

~WHEN HARUKA REFERS TO HIS "TEA BOWL," HE'S USING THE TERM CHAWAN, WHICH IS AN ALL-PURPOSE BOWL USED FOR TEA OR RICE. WE THOUGHT ABOUT TRANSLATING IT AS "TEA CUP," BUT SINCE THE BOWL LACKS A HANDLE AND TYPICAL WESTERN ASSOCIATIONS OF DELICATE PORCELAIN BEVERAGE HOLDERS, WE WENT WITH THE MORE LITERAL TRANSLATION.

~AMEFURI-KOZOU MEANS "RAINFALL YOUNGSTER," AND HE'S AN ESTABLISHED GHOUL FROM JAPANESE FOLKLORE, WHO, AS DEMONSTRATED, MAKES IT RAIN.

~KANTAROU'S KUJI. THE KUJI (LIT. "NINE SYMBOLS") MORE OR LESS MEAN, "CONFRONT - SOLDIER - FIGHTING - PERSON - EVERYONE - POSITION - IN FRONT" AND COMPRISE A SPELL FOR SELF-DEFENSE GENERALLY PROTECTING THE BODY FROM HARM. THE KUJI SHOWS UP FREQUENTLY IN ANIME AND MANGA (SAILOR MARS USES THEM!), AND THERE IS A SET OF HAND GESTURES ASSOCIATED WITH THE SPELL AS WELL.

~FENG SHUI COMPASSES. KANTAROU USES THE TERM, KIKKYOU-HOUI-BAN TO REFER TO THE DIAGRAM TRAPPING HARUKA. THIS CAN BE BROKEN DOWN TO MEAN "FORTUNE DIRECTION BOARD" AND IS AN OCTAGONAL DIAGRAM USED IN FENG SHUI ANALYSIS WITH EACH DIRECTION OF THE OCTAGON (NORTH, NORTHEAST, ETC) HAVING SIGNIFICANT ASPECTS ON IT THAT WHEN MAPPED ONTO A HOME CAN PROVIDE INFORMATION ON CORRECT ORIENTATION/PLACEMENT, ETC. THE HAKKEIKYOU IS AN 8-SIDED DIAGRAM THAT IS SUPPOSEDLY A TOOL THAT CONVERTS SHAPES MEANING HARMFUL INTENTIONS INTO PHYSICAL/CONCRETE DAMAGE.

~THE OWNER OF THE YOUKAI SHOWCASE IS A TANUKI. USUALLY TRANSLATED AS "JAPANESE RACCOON DOGS," THESE REAL ANIMALS (NYCTEREUTES PROCYONOIDES) ARE PORTRAYED IN FOLKLORE AS NOTORIOUS TRICKSTERS. LIKE FOXES, THEY CAN SUPPOSEDLY SHAPE-SHIFT, AND THEY'RE OFTEN DEPICTED IN STATUES STANDING IN FRONT OF RESTAURANTS AND LIQUOR STORES AS FAT, COMICAL FIGURES, WHO ARE USUALLY INTOXICATED.

~YOUKO'S LINE ABOUT THE WALL-SCROLL UPON SEEING THE PARADE OF FLEEING YOUKAI ALSO REFERENCES THE NIGHT MARCH OF THE HUNDRED DEMONS (HYAKKIYAGYOU--百鬼夜行) WHICH IS ANOTHER FOLKLORE STORY THAT FREQUENTLY APPEARS IN ANIME AND MANGA.

CHAPTER 3

~KOTODAMA (言霊) ARE WORDS THAT ARE BELIEVED TO HAVE THE POWER TO AFFECT THE WORLD, OR CONTROL PEOPLE. SOMETIMES THE WORDS ARE CONNECTED FAIRLY LITERALLY TO EVENTS (AS KANTAROU EXPLAINS), SOMETIMES THEY'RE MORE ABSTRACT.

~KANTAROU PRESENTS HARUKA TO HIS NEW RELIGIOUS FOLLOWERS AS A YORISHIRO (依代 OR 通代). A YORISHIRO IS AN OBJECT OR PERSON INHABITED BY A SPIRIT WHEN IT DESCENDS FOR A RELIGIOUS CEREMONY.

~"THIS HAS GONE FAR ENOUGH." (PAGE 159) WHAT KANTAROU SAID HERE IN JAPANESE IS, "WE HAVE TO APPLY THE MOXA SOON." MOXA IS A TRADITIONAL JAPANESE HOME REMEDY THAT INVOLVES BURNING CONES OF GROUND MUGWORT ON THE SKIN. REGARDLESS OF WHETHER OR NOT IT IS EFFECTIVE, IT'S NOT A PLEASANT TREATMENT, AND SO THE PHRASE ALSO HAS AN IDIOMATIC MEANING OF, "TIME FOR PUNISHMENT!"

~KANTAROU'S PRAYER. THIS IS A NORITO (祝詞), OR A TRADITIONAL SHINTO PRAYER. TYPICALLY USED FOR PURIFICATIONS, IT'S AN ORIGIN STORY, OF SORTS, IN ARCHAIC JAPANESE. FOR MORE ON NORITO, CHECK OUT THIS WEBSITE! IT INCLUDES A TEXT OF THE PRAYER WRITTEN IN KANJI, FOR ANY AMBITIOUS READERS WHO ARE CURIOUS. :-) HTTP://WWW.NIHONBUNKA.COM/SHINTO/SHINTO-NORITO.HTML